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# Welcome

Take a look at  
Kevin Crossley's  
cult-classic art  
on page 8

## WELCOME TO FANTASY ARTIST

**B**orag Thungg, Earthlets! Sorry, but with Judge Dredd standing there I just couldn't resist Tharg the Mighty's customary greeting. This issue we've got loads of great stuff for you – if thrill-o-meters were actually a thing then we'd have just broken one. Not only do we interview Kevin Crossley about Dredd, Fighting Fantasy and all of the other wonderful stuff he draws and paints (p8) but this issue is packed to the gills with tuition for all kinds of fantasy and sci-fi artists.

Check out our cover tutorial on fantasy lighting over on p34, it's scorching hot. Embrace the spirit of the season and create a gorgeous nature-witch character on p40. Get a complete guide to elves and how to draw them on p46, create fantasy worlds from photos on p52 and learn how to use the cuts-based colouring technique that makes comic art pop on p58. Take a wonderful journey with manga art on p62 and discover essential tricks for painting a Norse goddess on p68. And that's not all: in our Art Skills section this issue you'll learn how to create pin-ups,

aliens, Japanese demons, frost giants, manga magicians, classical warriors and quest fantasy. Splundig Vur Thrigg!



*April*

## Get in touch with the team



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fantasyartist@imagine-publishing.co.uk

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chance to see your work in the magazine

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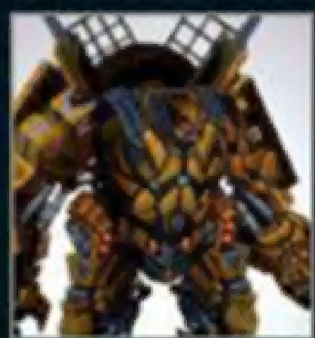
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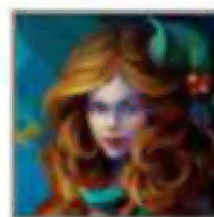
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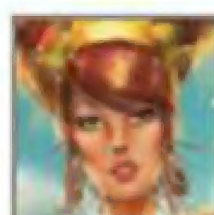


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**Robyn Drayson**

[rajewel.deviantart.com](http://rajewel.deviantart.com)



Create our beautiful cover image this issue with Robyn's tutorial on fiery fantasy lighting effects. Check it out on [p34](#).



**Jennifer Healy**

[www.beautifulburden.com](http://www.beautifulburden.com)

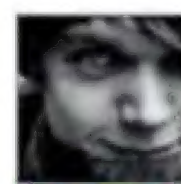


Paint a magical portrait in this tutorial from Jennifer. Learn how to develop a hedgewitch character and nature scene in her guide on [p40](#).



**Jonatan Iversen-Ejve**

[einen.deviantart.com](http://einen.deviantart.com)



Meet some of the common types of elves you'll find in fantasy and learn how to represent them in Jonatan's tutorial on [p46](#).



**Jennifer Cirpici**

[www.breakingcanvas.com](http://www.breakingcanvas.com)



Learn how to use photos and matte-painting techniques in Photoshop to create a believable fantasy world in Jennifer's how-to guide on [p52](#).



**Ben Prenevost**

[prenevoststudios.com](http://prenevoststudios.com)



Use the cuts-based colouring technique inspired by comics to create a heroic character and epic scene in Ben's tutorial over on [p58](#).



**Gilang Andrian**

[alchemaniac.deviantart.com](http://alchemaniac.deviantart.com)



Take a magical journey into the world of manga and its iconic skyships with Gilang's expert guide to painting a sky scene over on [p62](#).

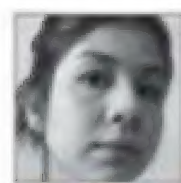


# The artists

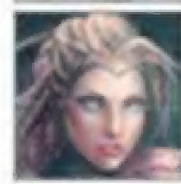
Meet this issue's collection of experts

**Lili Ibrahim**

[www.liliibrahim.com](http://www.liliibrahim.com)



Work with a character and iconography from Norse mythology to create an Asgardian goddess in Lili's tutorial on [p68](#).



**RB White**

[rbwhiteart.blogspot.co.uk](http://rbwhiteart.blogspot.co.uk)



Design an entirely different kind of mythical goddess with RB White's pin-up tips in the Art Skills section, which starts over on [p76](#).



**Edward 'Joel' Wittlif**

[tinyurl.com/paperbagninja](http://tinyurl.com/paperbagninja)



Discover sci-fi's classic alien archetypes, from little green men to predatory queens, and learn how to draw them on [p78](#).



**Amber Hill**

[vantid.deviantart.com](http://vantid.deviantart.com)



Explore the rich and mysterious creatures found in Japanese myth and discover Painter techniques for drawing them in this guide on [p80](#).



**Jukka Rajaniemi**

[www.jukka-art.com](http://www.jukka-art.com)



Learn how to create a range of frozen and icy effects that will enhance many kinds of fantasy artwork in Jukka's quick-fix tutorial on [p82](#).



**Schin Loong**

[schin-art.tumblr.com](http://schin-art.tumblr.com)



Meet some of manga and anime's classic magic-using character archetypes, from the magical girl to the sinister sorcerer, on [p84](#).



**Matt Olson**

[tinyurl.com/fa-matto](http://tinyurl.com/fa-matto)



Be inspired by iconic warriors of ancient history like the Amazon, knight and more in Matt Olson's drawing guide over on [page 86](#).



**Giuseppe Di Girolamo**

[www.peppeti.blogspot.it](http://www.peppeti.blogspot.it)



Explore some of the essential poses you need to draw characters in a quest-fantasy narrative in the tutorial over on [p88](#).



**Milton Das**

[dantevirgil.deviantart.com](http://dantevirgil.deviantart.com)



Take a look at the process Milton Das used to create his painting Mysterious Ninja Girl in the Evolution of an Image interview on [p92](#).



# Fantasy Artist

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# Cult fantasy classics

Kevin Crossley discusses Judge Dredd, Fighting Fantasy and his new must-have art book

## KEVIN CROSSLEY

Artist info



[www.kevcrossley.com](http://www.kevcrossley.com)

Kevin Crossley has created artwork for a range of fantasy publications and comics. He works both digitally and traditionally.



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[www.facebook.com/  
DigitalArtistUK](http://www.facebook.com/DigitalArtistUK)

“ Magic can be  
wrought by the simple  
spell of hard work, hard  
study and late nights ”







Kevin Crossley has been a busy man this year. He has produced his own art book, *101 Top Tips from Professional Fantasy Painters*, which stars his own work and that of a host of other fantasy art luminaries that he has collected together. He's created the artwork for the 30th anniversary edition of Ian Livingstone's *Fighting Fantasy Blood of the Zombies* choose-your-own-adventure book. And with all of these projects under his belt, he's also found time for some of his most popular work – creating paintings and drawings of the iconic Judge Dredd for both the comic *2000 AD* as well as private commissions. We caught up with him to find out more about his art and what it's like to work on some of fantasy's most exciting franchises.

## Tell us about yourself and your background?

I went to Jacob Kramer Art College in Leeds before studying design at university. During these years, fantasy art and comics were only ever things I did in my free time, as I figured studying typography and graphic design would be the best subjects to build a career out of. Twenty years later that logic is looking a little shaky!

After uni I was unemployed for two years, spending my days job hunting and painting.

“ I tend to spend long, long hours chasing details ”

Curiously my subjects weren't comic characters or fantasy, but botany; plants, fungi and animals. I taught myself how to use watercolours and gouache during this time and the study of organic forms would be of great benefit in my later career.

Eventually I got a job as a texture artist for a videogame studio in Sheffield, and from there went to Core Design in Derby. Although doing art and models for games was fun, I gradually drifted back to doing the odd bit of fantasy drawing in my evenings... an orc here, a dragon there, until a friend saw some promise in what I was doing and introduced me to a US D20 book publisher called Green Ronin. It was a taste of things to come.

## How would you describe your style?

I think this question is always best directed at anyone other than the artist! Style is almost always an attribute recognised or defined by an audience I feel, I simply can't recognise any specific style in my work, maybe I'm too close to it! My primary love is pencil art and I tend to spend long, long hours chasing details into a composition and then teasing apart the edges, corners and tendrils of that work to see what new texture or detail will reveal itself.

Detail is something I am accused of a lot, in both [positive] and critical terms! Maybe that's as good a definition of my art as anything. Too much detail can be damaging, though, so finding the right balance is a constant battle.



● **Judge Death (above), Real media** This was purely a test painting to try out some more acrylic techniques. A very swift painting that came together quickly. That's a shard of glass sticking out of Death's helmet, by the way  
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● **Fighting Fantasy (right), Real media** I had the great honour of producing 35 ink drawings for the 30th Anniversary *Fighting Fantasy* book by Ian Livingstone. This has less drama than some of my others, but I liked the perspective of the shot, with the sinister zombie mindlessly eating aquarium fish at the back









● **Judge Dredd (above), Real media**  
A pencil drawing of Dredd based upon a photoshoot that featured Greg Staples as Dredd! I loved the perspective of this, and built a redesigned Judge costume around it  
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● **Judge Dredd (above right), Real media**  
Another Dredd commission, again in acrylics. A fun opportunity to play with the Lawmaster bike design. Check out more Judge Dredd at [www.2000adonline.com](http://www.2000adonline.com)  
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● **Blood of the Zombies (right), Real media, Photoshop**  
This is a special painted illustration for the digi-version of Ian Livingstone's book

## When did you first start creating artwork?

The same time most other kids do, I think, as soon as I was able to hold a crayon! The earliest things I remember drawing include pictures of The Hulk fighting giant spiders on my bedroom wall. I must have been three or four when I did those. There was a Doctor Who Weetabix promotion in 1977, and I was so thrilled to see Daleks all over my breakfast cereal box that I drew them constantly for ages. When I was six I learned about biology and the skeleton inside the body and that started a new fascination; that of exploring and understanding how things work. Then in 1979 *Alien* came out and my dad got hold of a book filled with stills from the movie. Don't ask me how, but I managed to find it, and when I saw that creature Giger had designed it blew my mind. The fact I was drawing aliens when I was seven years old probably explains a lot!

## And when did you first start work professionally in the art industry?

My first freelance illustration job came along in late 2002, and was for Green Ronin. They asked for eight pencil drawings of demon warriors! There was no brief as such, I got to design the creatures myself and I must have spent 18 hours on the first one alone (a mantis armed insect-like creature with a long, whipping tongue tipped by a spined, pustulent

growth). This led to hundreds of such illustrations for publishers, before I began to get into comic art.

## What or who are your primary influences?

My very first influences were comics like *The Beano*, *Whizzer and Chips* and *The Dandy*, and then came *Asterix*. The art of people like Uderzo, Dudley Watkins, Tom Patterson and Ken Reid had a lasting effect on me. I loved the anarchic energy of it and the comic inventiveness. Later I would become a massive *2000 AD* fan, but that early comic stuff would always remain with me. It creeps into my art to this day.

## What inspires you?

Seeing the great acts or achievements of other people. Greatness can be seen in so many places; artists, musicians, writers and athletes. When you see what it is possible to achieve it really does fill you with the resolve to see what you can do. Alan Moore said something about the creation of art being akin to magic, and that's how I used to think when I'd look at a page of Brian Bolland's Dredd, or Glenn Fabry's Slaine. How much of their soul had they sold to get that good? After decades of practice, you begin to realise that magic can be wrought by the simple spell of hard work, hard study and late nights. Easy to say, hard to live by! I am constantly questing to keep up with... those that stride so magnificently before me.



“ I read about a new Dredd film ten years ago... they’ve got it just right ”

**How long have you been into fantasy and sci-fi, and what is it you love about the genre?**

All my life really, although I became more obsessed by it in my teens. There are numerous forms of escapism that people can lose themselves in, but fantasy art is perhaps the most obvious, brazen form.

A great Frazetta painting promises so much adventure and drama. I would lose myself for hours just looking at books of fantasy art and still do. At first it was the idea or suggestion of adventure or fantastic battles with amazing creatures that hooked me, but gradually the physical process of creating the art itself would enrapture me. Slowly I’ve managed to unlock a few secrets of how such art was produced, but there is still much for me to decipher. It’s a passion that will keep me busy for life.

**What got you into creating fantasy art?**

I wanted to do what I saw my heroes doing. I wanted to inspire other kids to become artists in the same way they had with me. Plus, I liked the fact that I could totally lose myself in the process of drawing or painting. I still get a kick out of that.

**So let’s talk about Judge Dredd. You must have drawn him hundreds of times, how do you feel about seeing him come to the silver screen again?**

I love Dredd, and I have drawn the character more times than I can recall, but mostly as convention drawings or private commissions. Hands down, he is the character I am asked to draw and paint more than any other; him or the Dark Judges. I love drawing those, and am currently doing eight different pieces with the Dark Judges featuring in some way!

I first read about a new Dredd film about ten years ago, and what I read seemed to have great promise.

Finally it has come to pass, and it sounds like they’ve got it just right. As I write I’ve not seen it yet, but many of my friends have seen it numerous times and loved it, including artists who’ve been drawing him for twenty years. These are guys who know the character and his world inside out, so if they’re happy we’re all in for a treat I think.

I love the suit design, too. It pays homage to the very early concepts while looking practical enough to protect someone who is basically fighting battles every day for weeks on end. Keeping... the iconic helmet design was a great decision too.

**Tell us about some of the concept art you’ve worked on – what was your favourite and why?**

I still have fond memories of the first concept work I did, which was a version of the 10th Anniversary Edition of the first *Tomb Raider* game. It was for the PSP, and one of the elements I designed was a new character for a co-op game mode. Unfortunately that game was never released, but I also did hundreds of

cut-scene storyboards for it, as well as pages and pages of monster redesigns and environment paintings. It was a great introduction to concept art, and set me up for future games I would work on, including *Star Wars* and a very cool *Alien vs Predator* title, for which I did loads of Predator ship designs.

**What are your favourite digital and traditional mediums or software to work in, and why?**

Pencil is my favourite medium, and is the starting point for every bit of art I do. I taught myself how to paint in watercolours, then learned how to use Photoshop when I began working in videogames. I still love all of these mediums. Over the last few years I’ve been teaching myself how to paint in acrylics, and the results are so different compared to the translucent, wash style of watercolours. With acrylics you can paint light over dark, which is a new concept for me, but the opportunities presented by this are really exciting! I learn a new trick with each painting I produce.

**Do you combine traditional and digital media in your work?**

Combining traditional and digital techniques is one of the major reasons why I love producing art. To me, digital art is just another tool in my box, it has strengths and weaknesses just like anything else.

Part of the creation process involves exploring and understanding what the positive and negative attributes of a medium are, how to exploit one and compensate against the other. I enjoy working in Photoshop, but the most use I get from it is as a tidying tool. It’s great for removing unwanted spots, blemishes or even mistakes from scanned artwork, plus the Hue/Saturation tools are very useful for adding subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) tonal correction to art prior to submission. Every bit of art I’ve had published has been digitally tweaked to some degree.

**Are there digital or traditional techniques or programs you’d like to learn more about? What are they and why?**

I’d like to learn about Painter, which I’ve heard is great to use, but as most of the painting I do is traditional there has never been much urgency to do this. Another technique I never got around to learning was the airbrush, so I bought one earlier this year. That’s my next goal. After I’ve become more comfortable using acrylics, I intend to try out oils. I’d love to do some comic character art in the style of Caravaggio, that would be so much fun!

**Do you have a set workflow? What is it?**

I have no set workflow I’m afraid. I work when I can, as often as I can! Sometimes I have to fit work around life, and sometimes it’s the other way around!



**You've just released a new book, *101 Top Tips from Professional Fantasy Painters*. You mention that it's the kind of book you would have loved to get hold of when you were a kid. Why is that?**

Well, simply because the how-to books I saw as a child didn't give too much away about how the art was actually created. Many artists seemed to keep some of their secrets to themselves and, to be honest, I always liked that as it kept me guessing and in my attempts to figure out how a technique might work I would invariably discover some crazy method of my own. That said, I set about my book with the intention to reveal as much as possible about... the creation process. It wasn't always easy to describe how I'd done something, though, as sometimes you'll be working away without consciously realising exactly what you're doing. I learned a lot while working on the book, though, and I've picked up lots of new tricks since I finished, so I still have some secrets up my sleeve.

“ To keep learning and enjoying my art is all I need ”

**Who are some of the other artists that have been involved in the book?**

I've been lucky to have input from some great artists, some of whom have been my heroes for many years. Liam Sharp, David Millgate, Matt Dixon, Aly Fell and Manon Delacroix all gave their time generously to send me superb painted art, along with detailed descriptions of how they did it. I had some great advice from my favourite contemporary painter, Greg Staples, and I have a couple of choice *2000 AD* paintings by him in there. Matt Smith at *2000 AD* allowed us to use art by Kevin O'Neill, Lee Carter and Karl Richardson, plus a rare Slaine painting by Glenn Fabry too. That's a great lineup isn't it!

**What can *Fantasy Artist's* readers get from *101 Top Tips from Professional Fantasy Painters*?**

They'll get an artist's-eye view of a life lived in search of creative advancement. *101 Tips* is very much a personal journey laid out in book form, with accounts of some of my earliest fantasy art alongside brand-new works with everything in between. It's easy to get to grips with if you're just starting out, yet offers some challenging material for those with a bit more experience. Simply writing and illustrating it made me a slightly better artist, so I hope readers can enjoy similar results!

**Finally, what are your plans for the future?**

I'm itching to do more comic work, and I have numerous ideas for new books, too. To keep learning and enjoying my art is all I need to keep me going!



● **Beast (above), Real media, Photoshop** This is a digital version of BEAST, one of the paintings produced for my *101 Tips* book. I used Photoshop to paint over a scanned pencil drawing, and I had a lot of fun doing it

● **Totally Cool (right), Real media** A purely self-indulgent piece of pencil art. It's a twist on the Green Man, and took around 80 hours to do. It's the first of seven I have planned

● **Judge Dredd 2 (far right), Real media** This is an acrylic painting of Dredd, inspired by Simon Bisley and Jock. It was a private commission and one of my first attempts using acrylics  
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# Community

Get in touch with the  
Fantasy Artist team



FantasyArtMag



DigitalArtistUK



fantasyartist@imagine-publishing.co.uk

## Improve your art with Crimson Daggers

This community of artists is dedicated to helping its  
members create their best-ever work

**Life as an artist can be hard.** Whether you're a professional or you paint for fun, the need for a support network to help you improve your art is real. This is where Crimson Daggers comes in.

Set up by artist Dave Rapoza and currently managed by Dan Warren, Crimson Daggers, "is a free online community of artists from various fields of illustration. The group includes professionals, students, beginners and freelancers. Through networking everyone together, the group focuses on bettering everyone in it by providing feedback, advice, critique and general support for anyone in the field", explains Dan.

"When Dave first founded the group, the aim was to provide a study support stream to help people improve their fundamental skills. Since then it has grown to be a much more broad and social group, focusing on every aspect of portfolio development for all fields of illustration", he continues. "The aim of Crimson Daggers is to take the intimidation and mystery out of becoming a working artist in today's world. The group is here to provide honest and free feedback and advice to anyone who cares to ask for it... Members have included students wondering whether or not to stay in school, freelancers looking to get an edge in their professional portfolio,

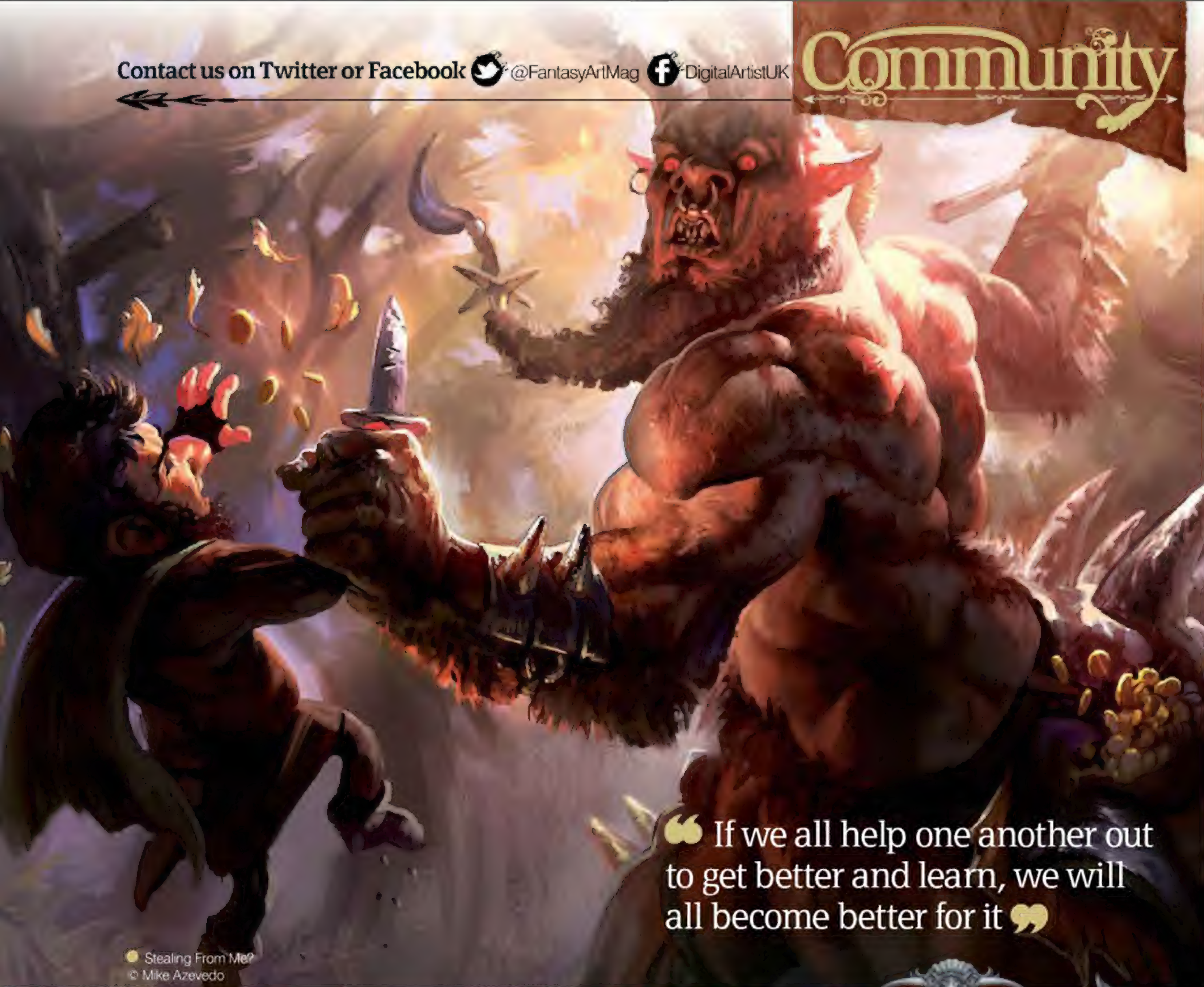
and struggling beginners who don't know how to take the first step into the seemingly daunting profession of entertainment artist... If we all help one another out to get better and learn, we will all become better for it."

It's a laudable aim, but who exactly are the Crimson Daggers and what do they do? As well as Dave and Dan, members include concept artists Alex Negrea and Nate Hallinan, and a fair few **Fantasy Artist** contributors like Suzanne Helmigh, Brent Hollowell and Titus Lunter. As to what members get out of the community, Dan explains that the group covers, "anything from portfolio development and critique to how to study and improve on fundamental skills. We have group challenges to give people an extra push if they need it, [we] offer free interviews with industry professionals regularly on our Livestream channels [and] talks and feedback to members' questions. At its most basic, the group helps to provide a sort of map for how to get into the industry, for beginners who don't know where to start, and runs on the core philosophy that basic information should be free and open. As the group expands, we offer more, and we hope it continues to grow."

Learn more at  
[www.crimsondaggers.com](http://www.crimsondaggers.com)







“ If we all help one another out to get better and learn, we will all become better for it ”

● Stealing From Me?  
© Mike Azevedo



● Sea Goddess  
© James Zapata



● Cathedral Knight  
© Dan Warren

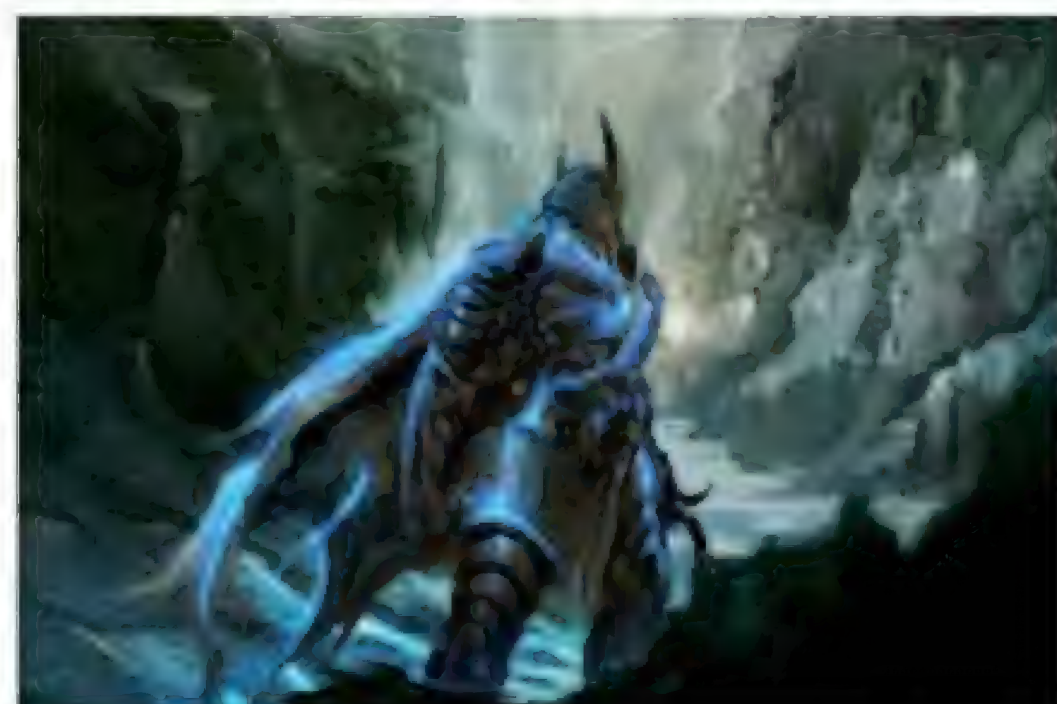




This month, we're showcasing some Daily Deviations featured by our Community Volunteers



Desert Queen by Nightlyre ([nightlyre.deviantart.com](https://nightlyre.deviantart.com)) started off as a slinky mermaid! We love how it progressed into a stunning reptilian creature with textures and patterns based on a rattlesnake. The artist includes a guide to her process on the site.



Far Away From Home by Skulio ([skulio.deviantart.com](https://skulio.deviantart.com)) makes excellent use of a minimalist palette and a rugged landscape to create a striking scene.



The Werewolf by Niconoff ([niconoff.deviantart.com](https://niconoff.deviantart.com)) stopped us in our tracks! An absolutely stunning mythical beast. Are you scared yet?

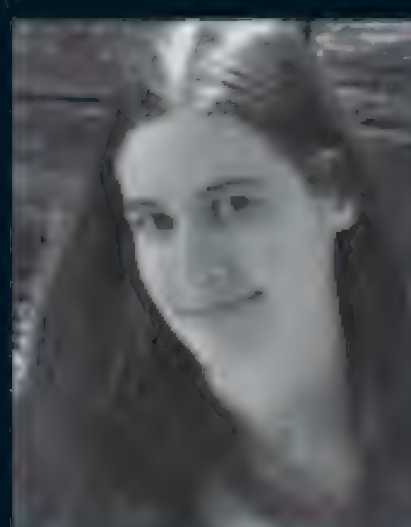
We hope you enjoyed these features as much as we did. Next month we're going to take a look at some artwork submitted by new members. Fiona Balsillie, director of community operations [deviantART.com](https://deviantART.com) | [fiona@deviantart.com](mailto:fiona@deviantart.com)



● Morning Thunderstorm

## Artist Spotlight Crystal Carter

Discover how creatures inspire this sculptor and digital artist



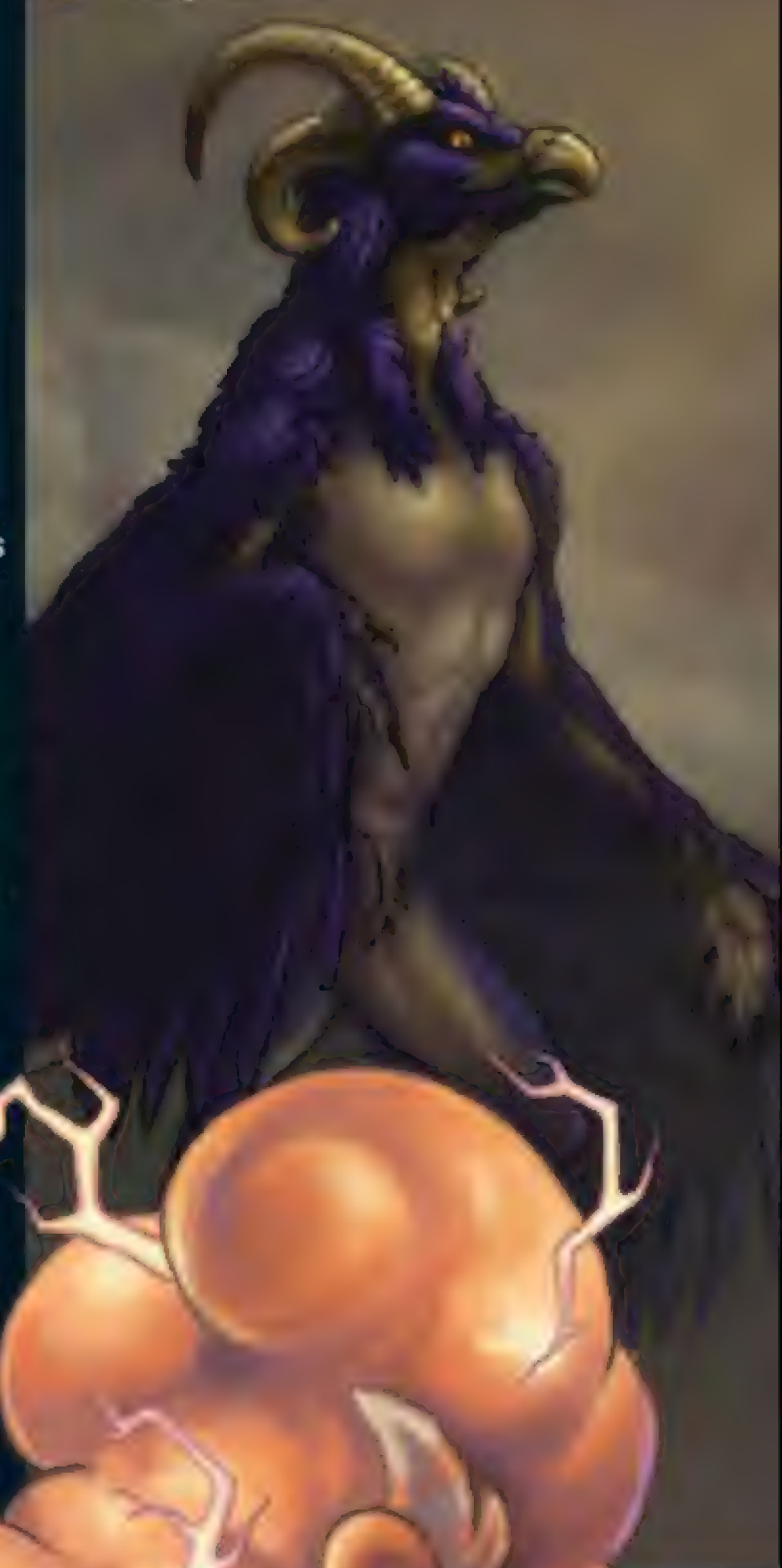
Crystal Carter is a fantasy artist specialising in wildlife. For her, the mysterious creatures that populate fantasy worlds are a fascination as well as what she has built a career on. "What initially captured my curiosity was the diversity in nature", she explains. "The potential for symbolism, mythology and storytelling that animals and nature present keeps my enthusiasm for the subject matter going."

Crystal works in both 2D and in 3D – the physical kind rather than the polygon-modelled version. She's fond of traditional media, but does bring digital into her workflow, often to complete a piece. "For paintings, I start with a pencil and marker drawing, then finish in Photoshop. [My] 3D work... is done in Super Sculpey, resin and painted in acrylic."

With a variable style, Crystal has created both realistic creatures and the more anime-inspired kind that are popular with anthro fans. "I would say my style is a combination of realism and something a bit more cartoon-like. I enjoy using realistic anatomy, colours and animal movement, but I also enjoy adding a dash of vivid colour and fantasy ideas into pieces."

● Find out more about Crystal's art at [www.wintersoulstudios.com](https://www.wintersoulstudios.com)

● Through the Dust



● Lightning Cloudcat







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# Community



**The Frog Prince, 2011**  
 "I enjoyed... the contrast between the girl and the cheeky frog"

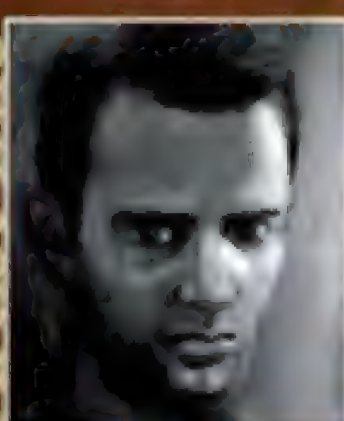
**The Sacrifice of the Little Mermaid, 2012**  
 "I was surprised by the amount of pain and blood in this story"

**Eowyn and the Nazgul, 2011**  
 "The real protagonist here is physicality"



## Artist retrospective

Artist info



**ALEJANDRO DINI** [www.creationspot.com](http://www.creationspot.com)

I work as a full-time illustrator, but what I present here are personal digital paintings that I have created for pure enjoyment, with no rules other than staying as truthful as possible to my ideas. Some of the illustrations that you see here on the page have been published or have been featured in books and magazines or on websites. That's why I do it; in order to share the fun with everyone. There's real joy in that.

### The Frog Prince

**2011, Photoshop**  
 ● This image was inspired by the tale *The Frog Prince* by the Brothers Grimm. I really like thin and long images, but they are hard to adapt for printing. For this reason I generally avoid it, except here. I enjoyed this one, especially the contrast between the weeping girl and the cheeky frog. I spent more time drawing the girl, due to the unusual angle.

### The Sacrifice of the Little Mermaid

**2012, Photoshop**  
 ● A scene from *The Little Mermaid* by Andersen. Unlike the Disney version of this story, the original tale is a lot more dramatic and mystical. I was surprised by the amount of pain and blood in this story. It felt like a tale of suffering and sacrifice, so that's what I decided to focus the illustration on.





*The Red Shoes, 2011*  
"A moment... when the man is about to cut [the girl's] feet and the tension finds its climax"

*Alice in Nukeland, 2011*  
"A reinterpretation of *Alice in Wonderland*"

*Shakti, 2012*  
"In Hinduism, Shakti is the embodiment of primordial female energies"

*The Fanatic, 2011*  
"An assassin madman belonging to a secret cult worshipping a tentacular monster"



### Eowyn and the Nazgul

2011, Photoshop

● The famous confrontation from *The Lord of the Rings*. Eowyn wasn't naked, but I envisioned this epic moment as a scene that a Renaissance artist would enjoy painting. It's about bodies: the ghostly appearance of the male and the tangible female who can kill him. The real protagonist here is physicality.

### Shakti

2012, Photoshop

● In Hinduism, Shakti is the embodiment of primordial female energies. This painting is a little tribute to that, but I also added more symbols. Each hand of the goddess represents one of the first six zodiac signs of light, growth and life. The snake is the masculine energy that is kept at bay by a simple gentle gesture.

### The Red Shoes

2011, Photoshop

● This is a slightly less popular tale by Andersen. Again I was rather struck by the violence in it, as well as the energy and tension that runs through the story, embodied in an ever-dancing girl. However, I decided to paint a moment of stillness: the instant when the big man is about to cut her feet and the tension finds its climax.

### Alice in Nukeland

2011, Photoshop

● This is a reinterpretation of *Alice in Wonderland*, originally made in a slight rush for a contest, but I had some fun with it. In this illustration Alice is a nurse in a post-atomic world filled with mutated creatures. I usually enjoy mixing drama, the grotesque and creepy things. I guess that overall it's as bittersweet as I wanted it to be.

### The Fanatic

2011, Photoshop

● I used to play role-play games with friends over the internet, mostly for the sake of inventing characters. This is one of them; an assassin madman belonging to a secret cult worshipping a tentacular monster. I liked the idea of giving him the most horrible tattoo in the world – a single line across his face and chest. Just for fun.





A Redtail's Dream is a web-based graphic novel set in a world of dreams based on Finnish myths

## Artist Spotlight Minna Sundberg

Creating a fantasy web comic is tough enough. Doing it in two languages at once is a real challenge, as the author of *A Redtail's Dream* explains



Minna Sundberg has an epic personal project – fantasy web comic *A Redtail's Dream*. “The world in which our story takes place is built loosely upon the world-view described in Finnish mythology”, she explains of the expansive graphic novel storyline that she illustrates and writes in both Finnish and English. It deals with how “a rift in the planes of the

universe is accidentally caused by the youngest member of the Fox clan, Puppy-Fox. The Foxes are the guardians of the northern lights, aka Foxfires as they are called in Finnish. The resulting disturbance isn't dire, but it does cause one remote earthly village somewhere in modern-day Finland to be caught in a kind of limbo-like state.”

All except for the unlikely heroes of the tale: the young man Hannu Viitanen and his dog Ville. “Puppy-Fox gives them the task of entering the world of dreams to return the souls of their fellow villagers home, before their time is up. And they are not very enthusiastic about the adventures that follow.”

It's a huge project, taking the equivalent of an entire working day for every single page, but Minna isn't afraid of the hard work. She sketches out the basic plan of a page in pencil, inks it, colours it in Photoshop and then works up the dialogue. “Since I do the comic simultaneously in two languages, this part takes a bit longer than it ought to”, she says, “but it's worth it.”

● Read *A Redtail's Dream* at [www.minnasundberg.fi](http://www.minnasundberg.fi)





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## Readers' gallery

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### Featured artists



#### Alex Tooth

[www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/alextooth](http://www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/alextooth)

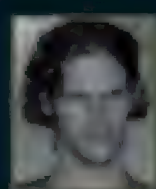
"I am a late starter to the art game, having only got into it seriously three years ago. I am looking to go into a strong graphic and colourful style."



#### Benjo Camay

[www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/the-hand](http://www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/the-hand)

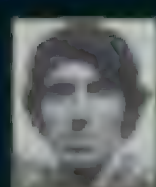
"I am an engineering graduate so I am a self-taught artist. My influences are Gérôme, Frazetta and Luna. I am always inspired by the world around me."



#### Jean Roux

[www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/kidult](http://www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/kidult)

"I am a freelance illustrator and concept artist from South Africa. I love drawing and painting and the fact that I can make a living off something I enjoy so much!"



#### Alyn Ware Spiller

[www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/nittrace](http://www.digitalartistdaily.com/user/nittrace)

"I'm a freelance concept artist and illustrator, and have been painting digitally for the last five years. I have a passion for environment art, focusing on the fantasy genre, but also like to experiment with styles."

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#### ● Little Village, 2012

Alex Tooth Photoshop

"This is a commissioned piece, and the brief was to create a small village. Home to a magical, mischievous and colourful little race called Flons, its influences include Japanese RPGs, hobbit holes and anime."







# Community

“ I got inspired to create this vampire-slayer character when I saw... an authentic vampire-slaying kit [online] ”







● **Vampire Slayer**  
**Kroua, 2012**  
**Benjo Camay**  
**Photoshop**  
 "I got inspired to create this character when I saw an authentic 18th Century vampire-slaying kit in an online auction... I got her name from the Latin word for spilled blood, which is *cruor*."



● **Underwater Girls #1,**  
**2011 Jean Roux**  
**Photoshop**  
 "The first in a series of three underwater portraits I did for fun and to use in my portfolio. These are digital paintings done from memory. No reference was used and it took about 20 hours... the hair took a while."

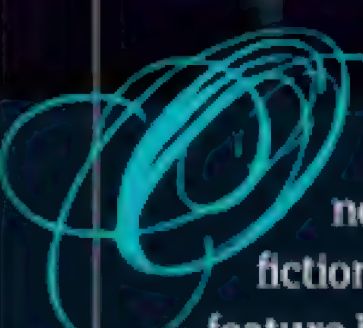
● **Ridge, 2012**  
**Alyn Ware Spiller**  
**Photoshop**  
 "As a personal painting, Ridge was an opportunity for me to indulge in my favourite themes and paint the kind of art I love: epic landscapes with subdued colours and a brooding atmosphere. It took me ten hours."

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# Key skills for sci-fi scenes

Alien worlds are so much more than flying saucers and little green men. **Poz Watson** explores how setting a scene and story can improve your sci-fi art



One of the wonderful things about science fiction is how much possibility it offers. It can feature humans, aliens or robots, it can be technological, utopian or apocalyptic and it can take place right here on earth or half a universe away. All it needs is something slightly different from the here and now of real life, sometimes known as the novum. This is the little piece of innovation (the science) that defines a world and kicks off a story (the fiction), and the reason why there is much more to sci-fi than meets the eye.

Concept artist Jonas De Ro ([www.jonasdero.be](http://www.jonasdero.be)) says that one of the most interesting things about science fiction is that "even though we are

many decades away from when the genre first originated, our concepts of possible future technologies have not changed that much. The reason is because reality and science fiction go hand in hand... Think about how the movie *Minority Report* influenced the current technology of touch screen smartphones and tablets." But while we still don't have our jetpacks, some things have changed. De Ro explains: "Back in the day the entire commercial music industry could be crammed into a few genres. Today, there are sub-genres of sub-genres, to the point where nobody even knows how to label things anymore. Science fiction

ideas are taking the same road... simply because it is the only way of continuing to be original."

So, there's hard sci-fi (accurately scientific), soft sci-fi (based on a change in the social sciences, like psychology or economics), time travel, alternate histories (what would have happened if Kennedy hadn't been assassinated?), cyberpunk (what happens when advanced science goes bad) and more. Genre mutation is particularly rapid in the punks arena: steampunk, for example, deals with a world of steam-powered high technology.

Dawid Michalczyk ([www.art.eonworks.com](http://www.art.eonworks.com)) combines elements of abstract and surreal art in



RAEVONA



REACH FOR THE STARS



BLACK LUNG

Lung Captain

The Black



his sci-fi work. One of his strongest influences is cyberpunk, and he says: "Cyberpunk is appealing to me because I have been into computers since the mid-Eighties. Back then, computers were these amazing tools that few people had, and even fewer knew how to take full advantage of them. You could type in pages of enigmatic codes that would magically result in a program. So the whole idea about computer hackers in a futuristic hi-tech world doing things few people can is cool." And that's the appeal of sci-fi in a nutshell. It's got science and ideas and the universe, but it's also got guns and spaceships and big robots. Basically, it's cool.



EPOCHOLIS

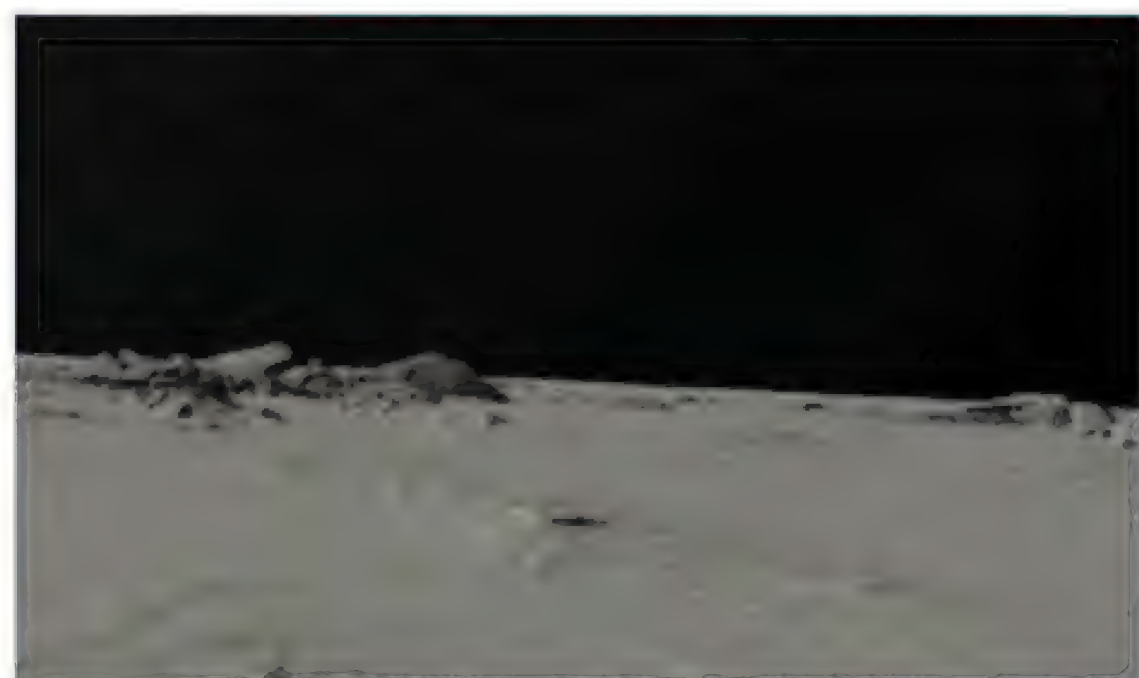






## Create some space

Dawid Michalczyk on designing space scenes



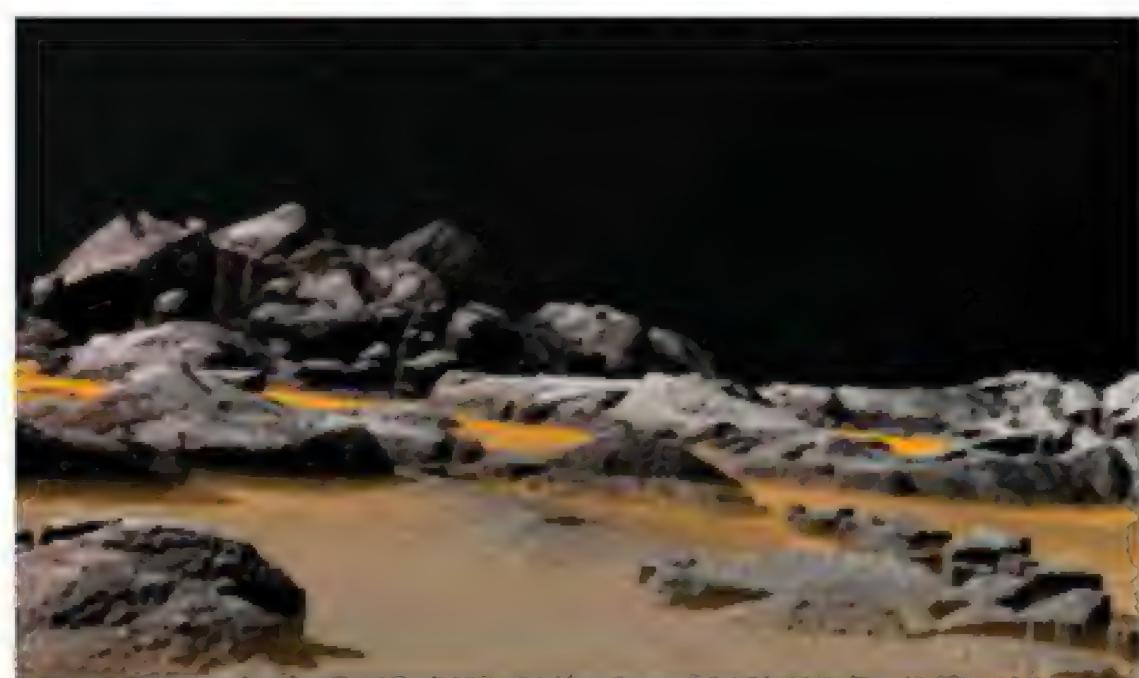
### 01 Basic lighting

"I do most of my space artwork in Bryce", says Michalczyk. He starts "by adjusting the sky and sun settings to approximately match the type of lighting I'm after. Next, I create a single terrain mesh and manipulate it until I get the... look I'm after."



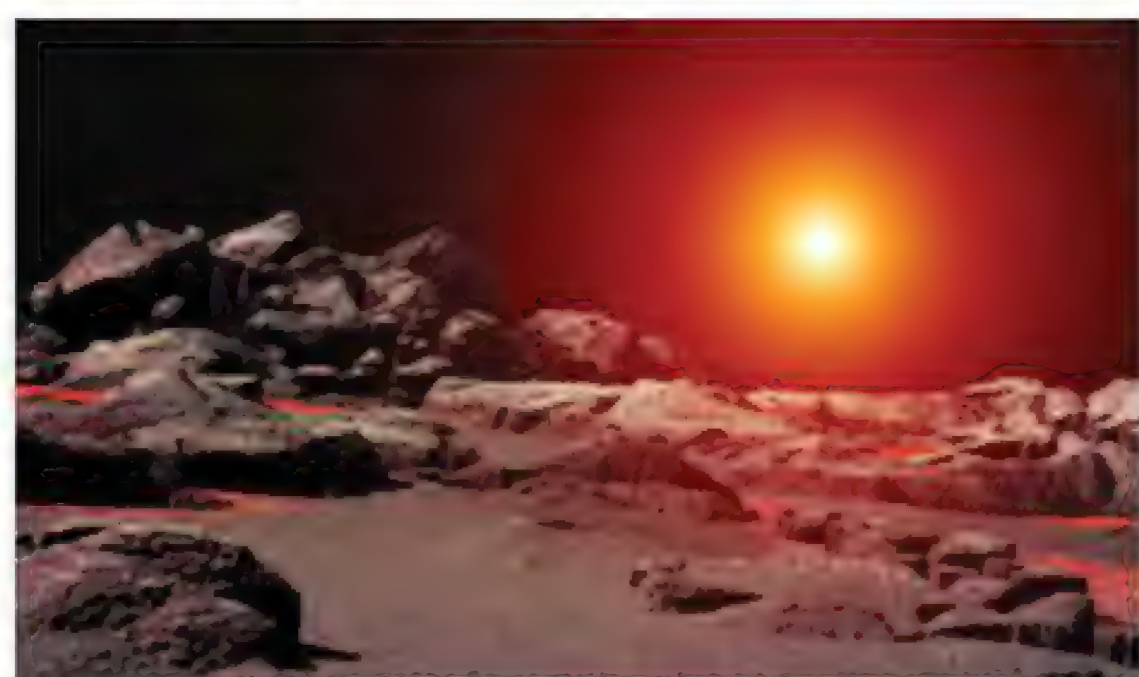
### 02 Textures and mesh

"I will also try different textures until I get one that works well", he says, describing his technique for surfaces. "Then I create a copy of the first terrain mesh, do some adjustments to create a variation of it and position it according to the composition that I have imagined."



### 03 Adjustments

Michalczyk then repeats these steps until he is satisfied with the way the terrain looks, noting, "during this process I often adjust the lighting and sky many times, I may change the terrain textures and may change the composition somewhat – sometimes very radically."



### 04 Post in Photoshop

Once satisfied with the lighting and terrain, he continues in Photoshop: "I do stars, sometimes planets and post-processing in Photoshop. I don't use any special plug-ins, just create my own stuff as that way my work is more original."



### 05 Final tweaks

Finally he makes colour touch-ups and other adjustments. "To prevent or eliminate banding", he notes, "I usually add noise either to the whole image or parts of it like the haze, fog or sky. I work in sRGB mode as that is the most compatible colour space today."

“Avoiding clichés is a bigger challenge than ever... The problem is not so much one of specific design, but rather one of concepts”

#### ORBIT REDUX

Orbit Redux features "a civilisation that has built structures right out to the perimeter of their atmosphere to greet arriving vessels", says Gary Tonge. He uses Photoshop and advises that: "Art comes from within you and that in turn comes from your experiences and your individual personality – let that shine through in your works"

Popularity brings its own problems, though, and the fact that sci-fi is such a hit at the cinema and on TV means that everyone, not just the hardcore faithful, have seen its wealth of ideas. "Today a lot of people feel like they've seen just about everything", says De Ro. "When creating sci-fi art, avoiding clichés is a bigger challenge than ever before... The problem is not so much one of specific design, but rather one of concept. Though we might easily come up with a unique look for a new spaceship, robot or armoured suit, the actual ideas behind them have been done many times... Unfortunately for modern artists, once something becomes a cliché, there is no turning back from it."

And if you can't ignore a cliché, what can you do? Embracing them is one option, subverting them another, and like any area of art you have to find the space to be true to your own passions. Gary Tonge ([www.visionafar.com](http://www.visionafar.com)) says: "I certainly steer clear from the... conceit of a war in space... I feel the majority of the universe enjoys a more peaceful and productive existence than many tend to paint."





The final frontier is a big topic. It's naturally compelling and awe-inspiring, and there's plenty of room for creative license. As André Zacharov ([cyriixx.deviantart.com](http://cyriixx.deviantart.com)) shows, space scenes "include pretty much anything in space created naturally, from planets and moons all the way up to entire galaxies. I... appreciate the massive scale these pictures [can create] while often retaining a lot of simplicity."

Simplicity is impressive when done well, but Zacharov also acknowledges that a lot of skill is required to make space images look real. "I often see people piecing together a scene using parts done separately, but forgetting to make them blend well", he says. "This can happen when importing 3D renders or textures. A good way I use to avoid this look is to add the lighting colours last. The shadows are important to get down early, but you can essentially not use a single [highlight] until you are almost finished."

And if you don't want to tackle whole planets but do fancy a big canvas, landscape paintings are also popular, showing the environment as well as the possible creatures and culture. The

detail in the work of someone like Gary Tonge is incredible, enabling him to tell a story and immerse the viewer in an experience. He says he achieves this by "being completely obsessed with trying to paint the perfect image." Recently, though, he has tried to force himself to work faster, and says: "I now often tend to be happier with the images that have not taken as long to do – ones where I have implied detail."

Matte painter and art director Raphaël Lacoste ([www.raphael-lacoste.com](http://www.raphael-lacoste.com)), who has worked on games like *Prince of Persia* and *Assassin's Creed*, also creates breathtaking landscapes. He says: "I love the feeling of immersion in a stunning location... I am still pretty open on the style of sci-fi, [it] could be grounded, near future or mixed with fantasy, as [long] as it is well executed with taste!"

One of the great pleasures (and challenges) of science-fiction art is how it encompasses cityscapes and the natural world, as well as creatures and technology. Technological changes are a dream to come up with when you don't actually have to invent them – in your

world time travel, mind control and hyperdrive could all be possible. Anything that can be done in fantasy, can be done in science fiction, the explanation behind it is simply technological (or pharmaceutical) rather than magical or paranormal. But while it's fun to invent, Kai Lim ([www.imaginaryfs.com](http://www.imaginaryfs.com)) warns against "mindless kit bashing. [Not knowing] how things work... An over-reliance on thinking that the audience is too stupid to figure out if a design seems plausible or not (the science in science fiction), [means you end] up insulting them instead." It is essential to know the reason things work and how they do. "Putting random rivets and pipes on machinery does not make for gritty design. Putting it where it should sensibly be, makes for gritty design", says Lim.

Of course, once you've designed spaceships and robots, it's natural to want to see them put into action, and combat is something that is often required to be depicted on book covers, as well as in films. Lim says: "Answering the brief is the biggest challenge. A combat scene may come with a narrative that needs [a focus]... The





+ image has to be constructed around it, otherwise the point is lost." Clarity is key, as is injecting a sense of energy into the image. Lim says this is not too difficult, "once the inspiring chemistry of explosions and crazy lighting... comes into play. I think one of the simplest ways to inject energy is to depict objects in different states of motion. I enjoy suggesting... a still frame, captured in time, of an extremely chaotic scenario, giving each area breathing room."

The success of a lot of science fiction comes down to plausibility, although artists disagree as to what level of it is required. For Zacharov, it depends entirely on what element of space he is depicting: "When drawing a close-up of a star at one point, I actually showed drafts of it to a family member who knows a lot about the physics of stars. This way I made sure that the colours and, to a smaller extent, patterns, roughly matched a real star of a similar type to what I wanted... Other times, often with things like nebulae, I will just go for the looks and not really mind if it's realistic or not."

When you're working to a brief the level of realism, or plausibility, is often determined by the client. "I am not trying to ground everything into a plausible world", says Lacoste. "It depends, of course, on the project and universe, the setting. Regarding *Assassin's Creed*, we have... a

scenario to follow so nothing is left to random. Inspiration, it has to be plausible!... If this scene is for a book cover, I will know at least about the script, and will also have a brief from the editorial art director", explains Lacoste.

But for other artists, what an image looks and feels like is much more important than worrying about where each individual rivet might go. "It's more about making things look as if they would make sense so that the viewer doesn't feel confused or unimmersed", says De Ro. "In many cases, imagining something plausible can help the artist in the design process. Particularly when doing props or other items, thinking about the functionality of what you're creating helps [with] figuring out how something should look, or be built. In the end, however, the priority is usually that something needs to look cool."

A big part of the joy of sci-fi is the leap into the unknown, so perhaps what seems plausible is beside the point. Dawid Michalczyk argues: "In reality, a spaceship from an advanced civilization could be the size and shape of an egg.... [and] there are endless possibilities of how to make an egg look more interesting. So I don't spend much time considering the plausibility of what I create. As long as it seems possible to me, makes sense visually and looks cool, that is all I need."

Kai Lim says he is a fan of Eighties hard sci-fi because it "blends thoughtful functionality with gritty, almost camp, over-the-top action... I think by focusing on what could actually work (at least theoretically), married with barely-believable but incredibly fun scenarios makes for engaging entertainment, and helps with suspension of disbelief. I feel it's win-win that way." But it's only win-win if artists can keep refreshing the genre. As De Ro puts it: "Artists and designers who did the first *Star Wars*, *Blade Runner* and other works that set many standards for years to come did not have the huge [back catalogue] we have today." Now, he says, all artists can do is "continue to work and think hard to come up with new original ideas."

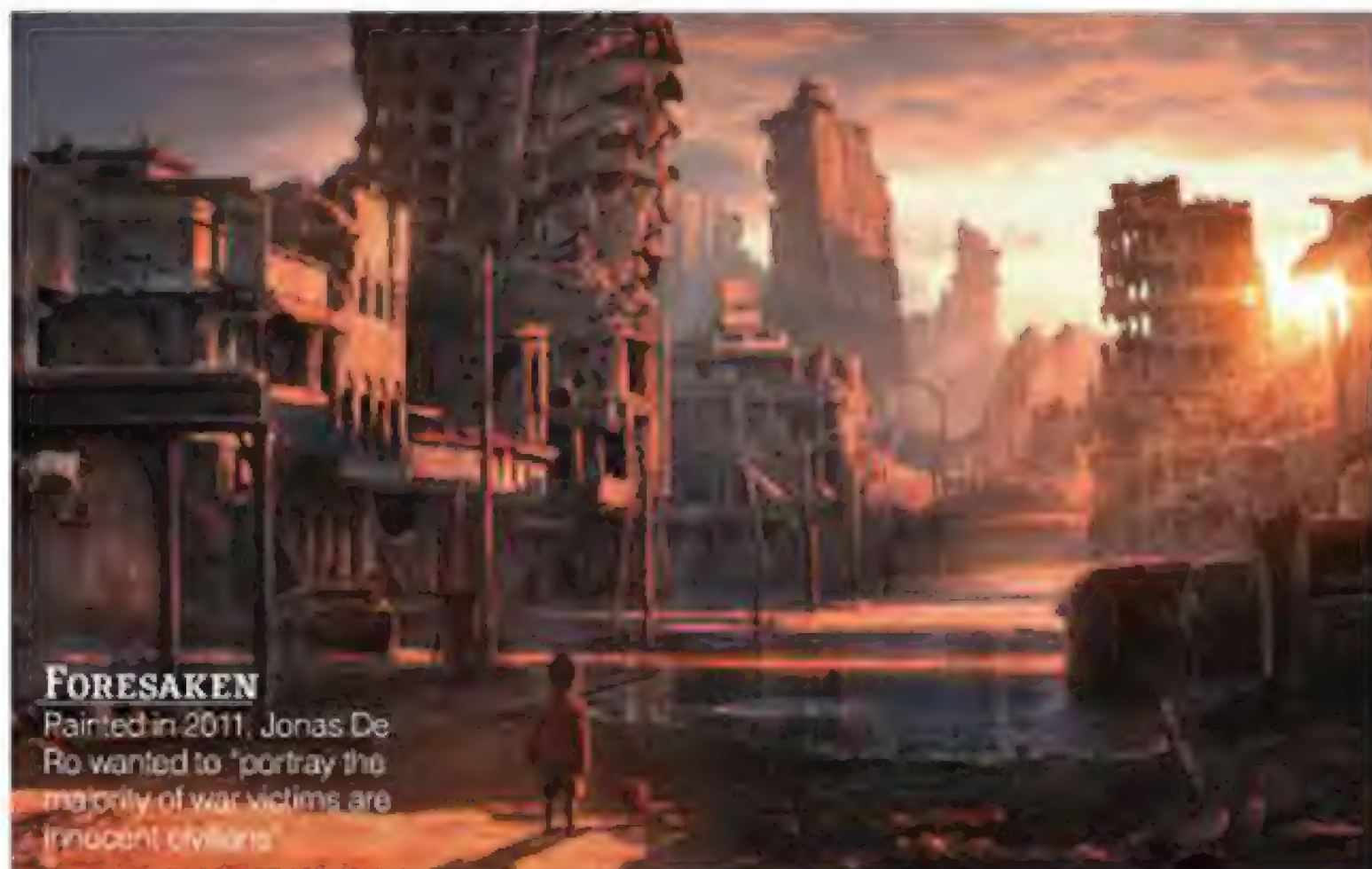
Put like that, it seems a daunting task, but how can young artists not be inspired by the mysteries of the universe? How can they fail to get excited about developments in space travel, in computer technology, in medicine? Tonge says: "The most compelling part of the sci-fi genre for me is the opportunity of illustrating something that evokes a feeling of hope and... happiness. I really enjoy creating images that tend to give our imagination some food for thought about what might be out there... or indeed what we might be able to achieve as humanity in the future."

## Out of this world

Urban or alien, desert or tundra – the sci-fi landscape has infinite possibilities



Jonas De Ro says that the biggest challenge when creating a sci-fi environment is "originality." His sub-genre of choice is post-apocalyptic sci-fi, and while it's hard to come up with an original take, it certainly has its advantages. Not only is it "intriguing and fun", but, he says, "they are also actually quite easy to do, since you can get away with mistakes a lot more... I usually add signs of new life. I like thinking of a destroyed world as the beginning of something new."



**FORESAKEN**

Painted in 2011, Jonas De Ro wanted to "portray the majority of war victims are innocent civilians"



**DESERT MOONS**

This new world was created by Dawid Michalczyk in 2011 using Photoshop and Bryce



Dawid Michalczyk creates a lot of alien worlds because you can do anything with them, and he thinks keeping things as simple as possible is crucial. "Especially in games and much concept art", he says, "there often seems to be [an] excessive amount of detail that does not make much sense or improve the visual in any way. I'm not against detail; in fact I love it when it makes sense. But, overall, it seems to me that there is a need for more balance."



# Putting the science in science fiction

The technology is what makes one sci-fi piece strong and another derivative

Kai Lim, co-founder and senior art director at Imaginary Friends Studios, works hard on the technology he paints, saying that he makes "a point to know more and more each time." When he's doing concept work for a client it depends on what they want and what time is available, but he does his utmost to "generate something fun and plausible at the same time."

You need a clear idea of what you're painting in sci-fi (or a clear idea from the

client) and this is doubly important in concept art, where you are designing something for execution in a game or film, not just drawing something pretty. So whether you're designing robots, spacecraft or weaponry, you have to have some idea of how it works, how that fits with the practicalities. What can the armour withstand? How fast does the ship go? Can the robot be shut down if it goes rogue? You have to know.



**Mace Aircraft Vigilance** IFS designed all the kit and characters for MACE ([www.macecommand.com.sg](http://www.macecommand.com.sg)). You can see here to what degree Lim works out how the craft fits together and functions.

This concept art for MACE Vigilance Alpha was created in 2010 using Google SketchUp and Photoshop

## Phobos

**Tactica** "My ideal projects have been where I get hired to design stuff that works and looks good", says Lim. "Stuff that I would want to own myself. I have done projects like those and the internal effort is pretty substantial. It's great to feel invested in the stuff you create, the only limit is my client's time and how deep they want to go."

Phobos Tactica 40K was created by Kai Lim in 2012 using Google SketchUp and Photoshop



Monsterapocalypse Now: Swarm was painted by Kai Lim in 2009 using Photoshop

**Monsterapocalypse Now: Swarm** Kai Lim's image was made for the *Monsterapocalypse* rulebook. He says: "One of the greatest gifts sci-fi has given me is the need to learn more... in the pursuit of coming up with things you can love."

**Alien Mind** Dawid Michalczyk's image was created in 3ds Max and Photoshop. He says: "If it's a personal work, I only know what I have imagined about the character or scene, which is usually limited to appearance." His intention here was to depict Clarke's third law, that sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.





# Fantasy lighting

**Robyn Drayson** uses intense colour and light effects to paint a powerful dragon engulfed in flames

← Destruction

Paint Tool SAI

The ability to create fire and lava effects is a skill all fantasy artists can benefit from having in their repertoire. Both can be created using similar techniques involving layer modes, such as Screen or Addition, to make them glow. Although lava is normally associated with danger, intimidation and power, fire is a versatile subject that can be used in a wide range of ways to create different moods and effects.

A small, contained flame with its warm, dramatic light can evoke feelings ranging from peacefulness all the way to dread and fear without needing to be the focus of the image. A larger flame, especially if not contained, can be frightening, intense and powerful. Fire doesn't even need to be directly visible to lend its influence. By creating warm, high-contrast lighting and ember effects you can imply flames nearby. Not being able to see the fire can

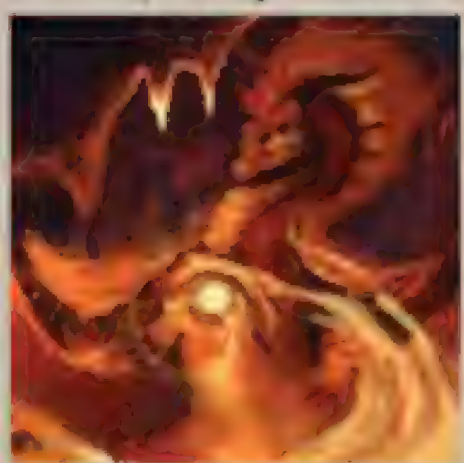
sometimes be more dramatic as it lets the viewer use their imagination. Also, you can use any colour of flame that you want in your fantasy work (real fire can be different colours depending on what it's burning, so this is not beyond what's realistic) to alter the mood of your image.

When painting fire it's important to find references to understand how it works. Generally flames are brightest near their source and extend upwards, influenced by airflow. Smaller flames tend to be edged in a lighter colour and this enclosed look helps make the flame feel safe or controlled. Larger, wilder flames have fewer clean edges. Adding a glow can make the flame feel powerful and hot as well. Explosions tend to be more self-contained with rippled edges rather than spikes. Also note that smoke is created when fire burns something, so you might think about representing what is fuelling the furnace.

## WORKING PROGRESS



Step 01, Rough concept



Step 10, Begin detailing



Step 19, Golden spiral





## ROBYN DRAYSON

Artist info



[rajewel.deviantart.com](http://rajewel.deviantart.com)

Robyn Drayson is a 22-year-old self-taught artist who specialises in fantasy artwork. She's always loved the freedom, possibilities and magic of fantasy work and enjoys the challenge and thrill of giving lifelike form to unreal subjects such as dragons and creatures.



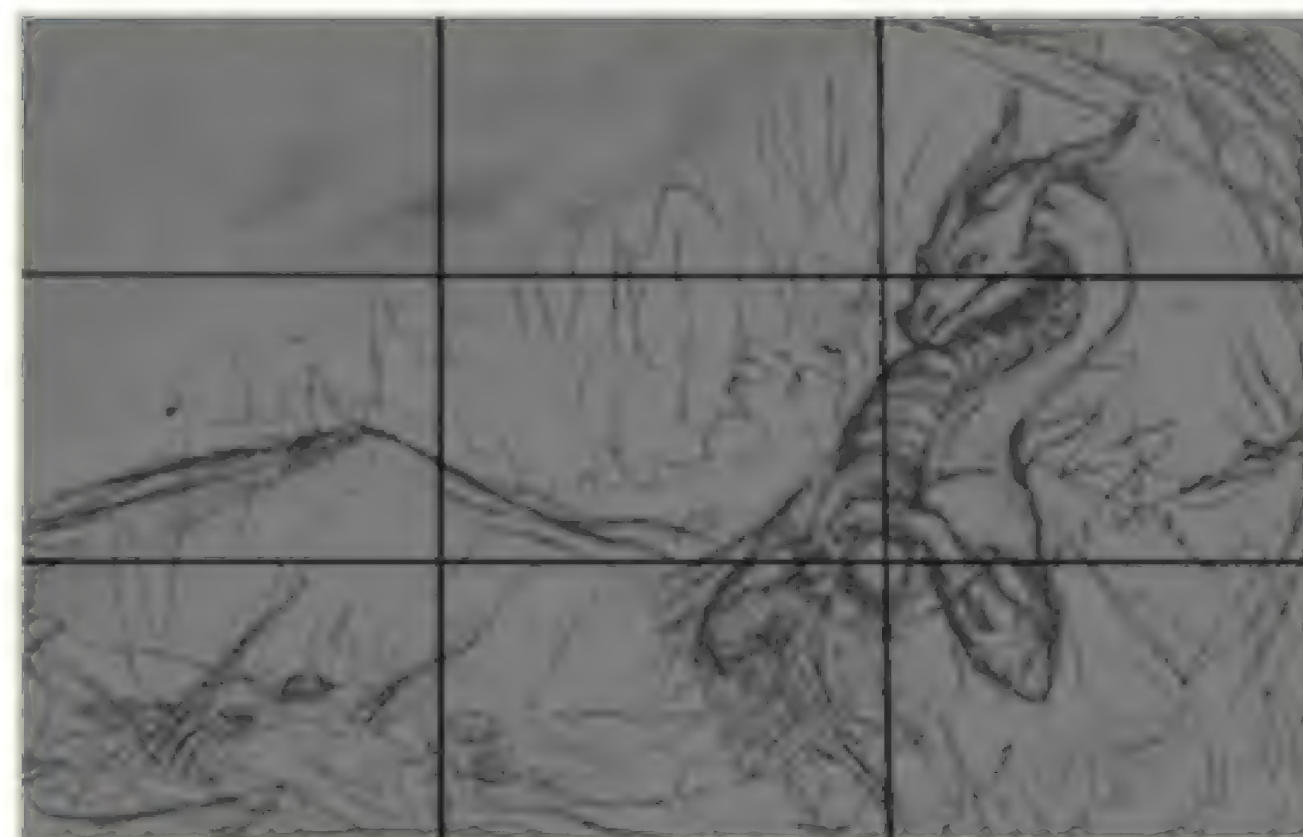


## Unleash the flames

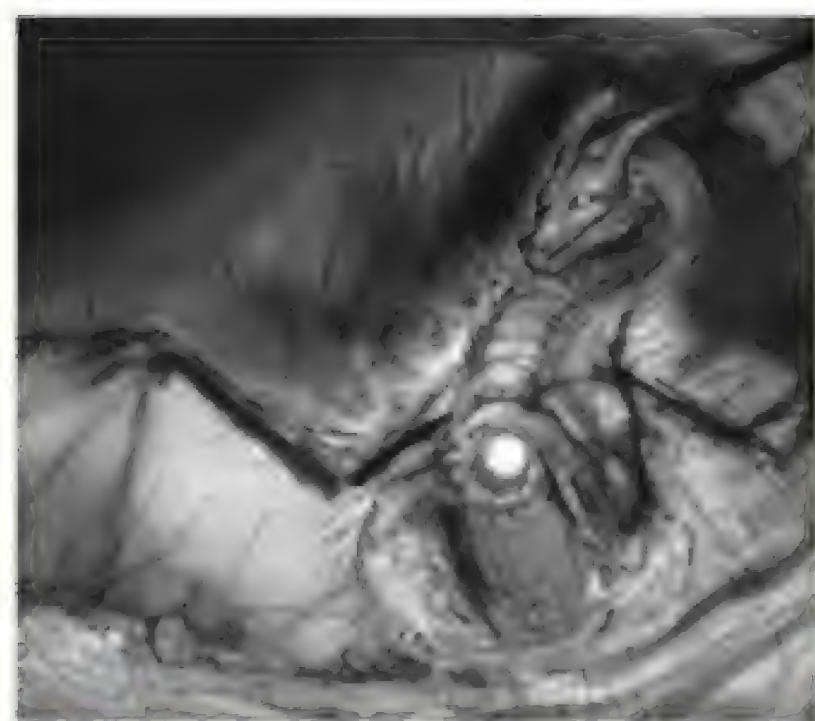
Follow the flow and let the fire fly

### 01 Rough concept

Sketch the idea loosely and don't be afraid to scrap concepts you think don't work and start again. No matter how good you are at colouring or rendering, a poor foundation can ruin a picture. To emphasise the feeling of fire, the dragon is given a curved, intimidating pose to mimic the shape of the flames.



**02 Check composition** The composition is a critical part of making a picture visually interesting. Here a three-by-three grid is overlaid to check the rule of thirds. Major points (such as the dragon's face and orb) should be close to the lines and their intersections.



### 03 Drafting light and dark

Because of all the light-emitting elements in this picture, it is helpful to quickly draft the areas of light and dark for later reference. Light is also a part of composition. Here the brightest parts are centred on the dragon to draw the viewer's eye.



**04 Base colours** Rough colours are added under the sketch. The palette consists mostly of red, orange and yellow, but some cool purple and blue is added to the shadows to make the warm colours pop.

### 05 Build hues

Since the face is a major area of interest, more colours are introduced and will act as a source to pick colours for the rest of the image. Similarly, brighter colours are introduced into the background to develop the of the lava. Don't get too detailed here before developing the colours of the rest of the image.



## START RIGHT

The sketch is the foundation of your picture; if you don't like it or think something is wrong, scrap it or fix it. Spending that extra time early on to work out the kinks and get an idea you love will save you a lot of frustration later and result in a better product.

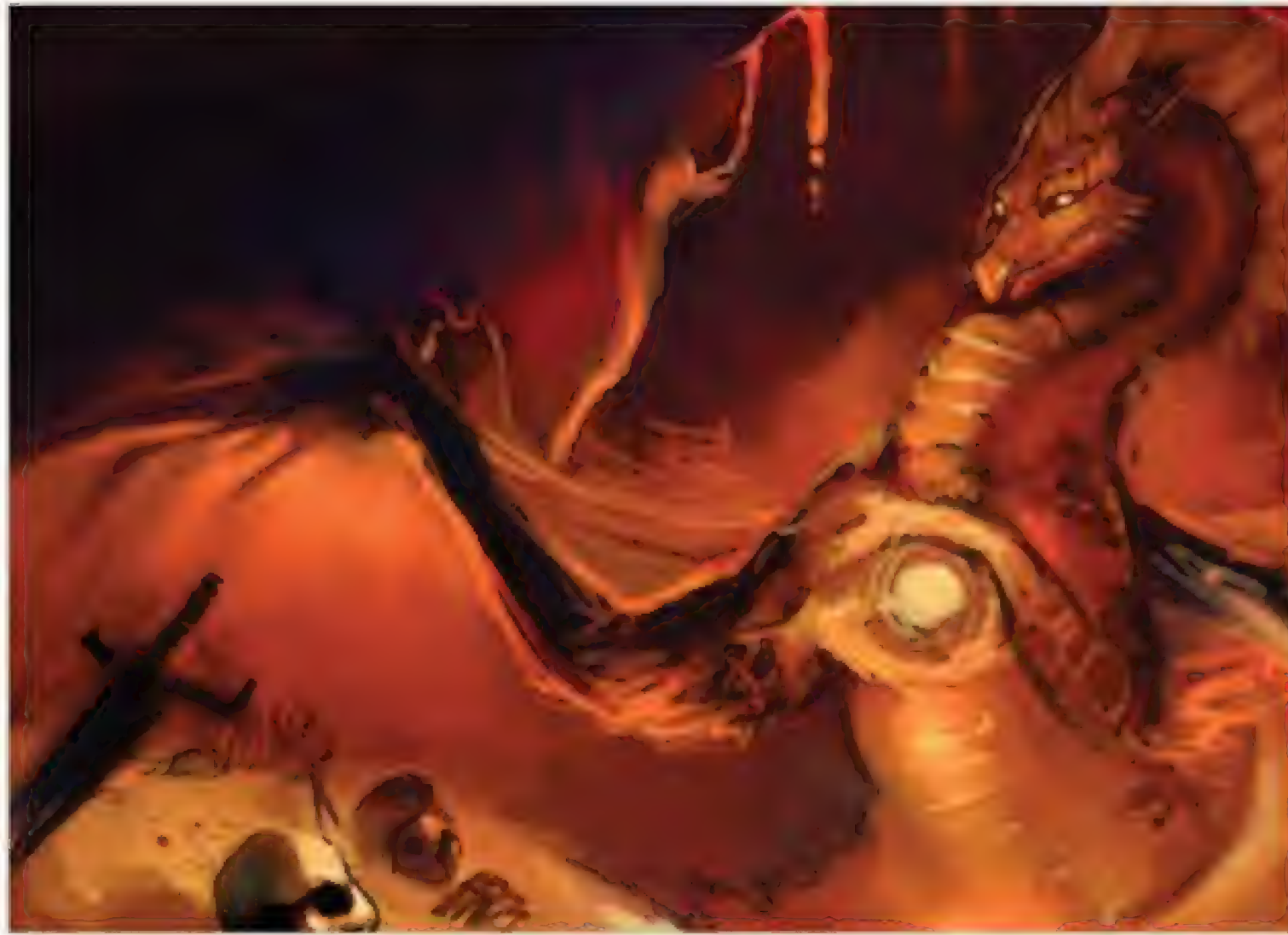


**06 Merge the sketch** Merge the sketch with the colours to help keep the flow and definition. By first setting the sketch layer to Overlay and reducing the opacity, the sketch will blend better with the colours. After merging the layers, block in the shading and define the background colours, painting over the sketch.

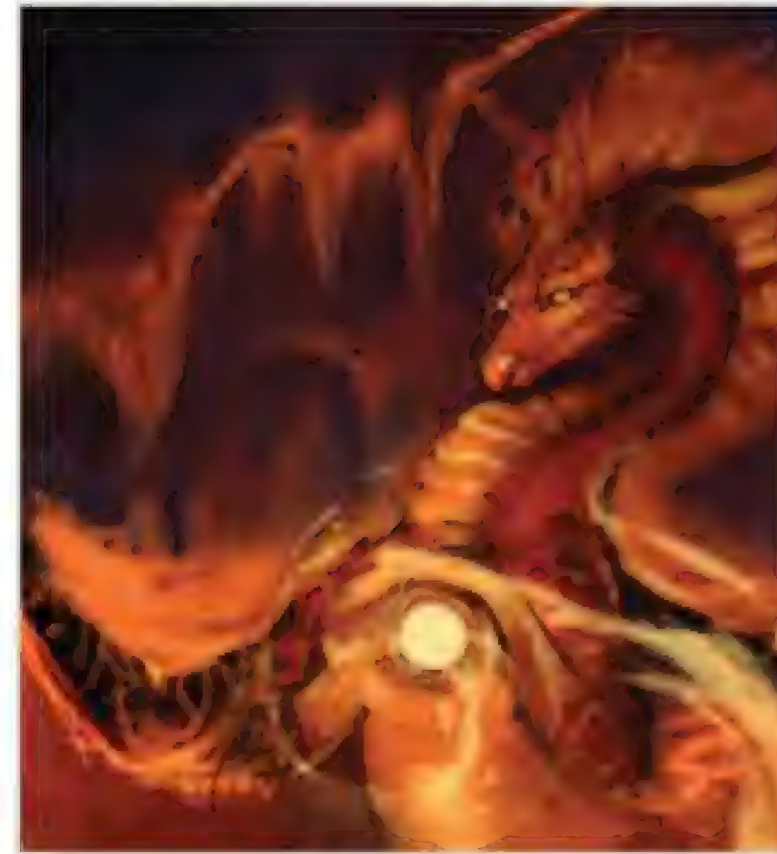


**07 Block in the dragon** Blocking in the background first lets you light and colour the dragon while taking into account the surroundings. This helps make the dragon appear integrated into the background and not pasted onto a backdrop. Picking colours from the background and using them on the dragon (or vice-versa) helps create unity.





**08 Improve the tones** Use layer effects such as Overlay, Multiply and Addition or Screen to build up the contrast and colours further. More blue and purple is added to the shadows, while orange and yellow highlights are added to boost the contrast. When it looks good, merge the adjustment layers with the colours.



**09 Adjust composition** The shape of the ceiling was changed to improve flow while molten gold swirling in towards the orb was added to direct the viewer back to it. Also, the areas of flame and lava are starting to be established but the form is left vague since that will be drawn on a separate layer.

## LIMIT LAYERS

Layers are great and have many uses, but don't go crazy with them, especially when using layer effects. Too many layers can break up your image and make it look like pieces are stuck together, rather than presented as one unified whole. It can get confusing and the process takes longer.

## 10 Begin detailing

The face is a natural focal point since the human eye is drawn to it. As such, it is important to make it look good – a poor face can ruin a picture. If you tend to lose concentration it may help to start with important areas like the face while you're fresh. If you get bored, work on another part.



**11 Flip the image** It's a good idea to flip your image every so often to check for mistakes, especially if something feels off but you don't quite know what. The face felt strange, and when flipped it became clear that the eyes were not level at all.



**12 Enter the flame** To create the flame, make a new layer. Here it is set to Addition mode but Screen, Normal or another may work just as well or better depending on your image. On the head, the fire will look a bit like hair or a crest, so individual tongues of flame are rendered with defined edges.



**13 More fire and lava** The Addition mode was changed to Screen because it was a little bit too saturated and bright. The dragon's neck has a lava-like effect where dark sections are on top of a brighter layer in order to mimic how a dark crust forms and cracks often appear to reveal the molten part below when lava cools.



**14 Finish the crest** Now you just need to draw in the tongues of flame one at a time in order to create a well-defined crest on the top of the dragon's head, and then reduce the red glow in order to make them look crisp. When drawing the flame detail, remember that fire is chaotic. It has certain rules, but do not try to control it too much otherwise it will look man-made and fake.





### 15 Add depth

Out-of-focus drops of lava are added at the top to make the cave feel like it's melting and that there is some distance between the viewer and dragon. An ambient red glow is given to convey the heat of the lava and create atmosphere behind our dragon.



**16 Wild flames** The flames along the top of the wings are less defined than those of the crest for a wild, intense look. The addition of a red glow furthers this feeling. As the flames move away from the dragon, less detail is needed and helps make the dragon stand out.

**17 Fire from below** The membranes of the wings have also started to turn to flame in this image, and they present a unique challenge since the flames will burn up not down. Because of this you'll see a lot of flame edges as they change direction, creating a rippled effect.

**18 Composition adjustments** The wing was looking weird at its current angle so was changed slightly. Remember it's never too late to make adjustments. There is also a smoke effect coming off the tip to smooth the transition to the dark part of the image.



**19 Golden spiral** As the picture takes shape, the composition is leaning towards that of a golden spiral (overlaid on image). Small changes are made, such as curving the gold pile to follow the spiral closer, to build on this observation and reinforce the composition.

**20 Too busy** All the fire near the chest felt far too busy and so was scrapped. The hands have been made more solid and the orb changed back to molten gold. In the foreground, a few mounds of coins are created to add another layer of depth and to balance the brightness of the area.



**21 Scales** Being near the focal point, the arms and hands need a large amount of detail in order to provide interest to the viewer and portray the story convincingly. Drawing in the shape of the scales after shading the arm helps keep the tones logical. Some of the scales may catch a bit of light and have a sharper highlight on their edge.





**22 Melting into gold** The belly is given more detail in the scales and the lava reduced to give the impression that the body is sinking into the gold below it. This makes it less busy towards the edge of the canvas, keeping the focus in the middle.



**23 All that glitters** Finally it's time to detail the coins on the gold pile. Being metal, they'll have high contrast. Slight angle changes can make coins in the same area a lot darker or brighter than the rest, so have a few outliers. The coins are left simple so that they do not draw attention away from the dragon.



**24 Tonal touch-ups** A purple Overlay layer set at a low opacity is placed over the entire image to unify the colours, push the cool shadows and change the overall tone slightly. An Addition layer is also used to add more highlights and refine areas of interest.

## EXPERIMENT WITH MODES

Most of the fire created in this image was made on layers set to Screen, but sometimes another mode such as Addition or even a regular layer may work better. Try out the different modes and see what works best. You can also duplicate a layer to use multiple layer effects.



**25 Final touches** A Multiply layer is added to push the darks and increase the contrast of the overall piece. Some small alterations are made and details added, like making more of the dragon's right horn visible, adding cracks to the front skull and adding more embers to finish.

**Style School**  
Art genres in a nutshell

## Classic fire effects

We look at three paintings of volcanoes for inspiration

Existing purely as light and energy, fire is a natural subject for painters to choose to depict, and they have done so throughout the centuries. All based on the eruptions of Italian volcanoes, these 18th Century works show how fire can be implied, depicted and manipulated for vivid effect.



Artist: Joseph Wright of Derby  
Title: **Vesuvius from Posillipo**  
Date: c1788  
Location/Owner: Yale Center for British Art  
Web: [tinyurl.com/fa-derby](http://tinyurl.com/fa-derby)

● Although Vesuvius from Posillipo doesn't have in-your-face destruction, the use of colour and the juxtaposition of mood between the sides of the image evokes strong, if not conflicted feelings in the viewer.



Artist: Joseph Wright of Derby  
Title: **Vesuvius from Portici**  
Date: 1775  
Location/Owner: Huntington Library  
Web: [tinyurl.com/fa-derby2](http://tinyurl.com/fa-derby2)

● The colours of this picture are powerful, with the greens bringing out the ambient reds created by the volcano. The parting of the clouds in particular shows the power of the volcano. Like Vesuvius from Posillipo, lava and fire aren't necessary to demonstrate the power of a volcano.



Artist: Alessandro D'Anna  
Title: **Eruzione dell'Etna**  
Date: c1770  
Location/Owner: Private collection  
Web: [tinyurl.com/fa-danna](http://tinyurl.com/fa-danna)

● Alessandro D'Anna creates a striking piece by using a dull, dark background to contrast strongly against the bright colours of the lava and fire. The billowing flames are bold and powerful while the sharp lines of the lava lead the eye to smaller details.



# Magical portrait art

**Jennifer Healy** shows how to paint a non-traditional witch and her surroundings

The Frey

Photoshop

When you think of a witch you tend to think of the traditional character with a long pointy hat, a long nose, warts, broomsticks and cauldrons. But in fantasy, witches are so much more than that stereotype and can hold a great deal of magic and beauty. A fantasy witch is a woman practising magic; sometimes black, but she can also be aligned with good magic. Her practice involves varying degrees of magic, shamanism, folk medicine and spiritual healing, calling on elements and spirits, veneration of ancient deities and the many forces of nature. This kind of witch can have

any appearance, but more often than not they are quite attractive. Being tuned to nature can also mean they look a bit unkempt, too, but in a pretty way.

You can have a world of fun when designing your witch's apparel, keeping her sexy but also strong. Her expression should be cool with a hint of mischief and you can add in natural elements to her clothing to show that she uses nature in her craft.

With fantasy images, you don't really have to be practical when designing your armour or clothing; it all depends on your personal preference. If you want your witch to be wearing a big fluffy dress, why not? If

you want your witch to be wearing heavy armour, go right ahead. She's a magical character, after all, so mortal concerns like tripping over a hem don't apply to her!

Portraying the character and the narrative should be your primary objective, so make sure that you add in elements to indicate she is a witch and attuned to nature. This can include a range of details like acorns, pine needles, berries, leaves and so on, and techniques and effects such as lighting, blur and varying levels of detail to give a strong sense of the occult. We will take you through the steps to paint this beautiful and unconventional witch.

## JENNIFER HEALY

Artist info



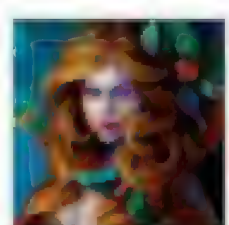
[www.beautifulburden.com](http://www.beautifulburden.com)

I have been painting digitally since May 2009. I used to be a pencil artist before that. My art usually infuses the beautiful and the ugly in a single painting. Each is also laced with a sense of wonder and mystique.









# The painting

Sketch, tweak and colour your scene

**01 Sketch the concept** With the concept in mind, sketch it all out to place everything before starting the painting process. Start with the background and perspective so you know where it's best to place your character for maximum impact. When you are ready to start painting, add a new layer underneath the sketch.



**02 Begin with lighting** Decide where you want the lighting to be and what colours you want to use for the overall piece. Use a different layer for the trees in case you need to change something later on. Start blocking in the front trees and work your way back, gradually getting lighter the further back you go.



**03 Liquify** You can add a little more detail to your trees if need be. Open the Filter menu and select Liquify to move and distort your shapes easily for more intricate branches and limbs. Another good method is to select the Lasso tool, Ctrl/right-click on the image and then select Transform. It's not as free as the Liquify filter but still works well.



**04 Fireflies** Now you can add some sparkle to the bushes and the air with fireflies and glowing berries. You can create a custom brush for these by opening the Brush palette, checking Shape Dynamics, Scattering and Transfer. You can go back into the options to set how far apart you want the scatter. You can also edit within the Brush Tip Shape menu to set how far apart the dots will be.

## DECISIONS

It's okay if you decide to change something from your original sketch. A good example is if you don't like the way something looks or you decide something else will look better in its place. As you go along, many things may be moved or switched around.

**05 Body outline** Now it is time to start on the witch. Use a single colour (we recommend something pale if your background is dark) for the base and a Hard Round brush. Be careful and clean when colouring in your lines because you want things to be as smooth as possible. It is best to pick a dark shade for the base so you can work your way up to the highlights. It helps to keep your original sketch showing at this stage so you know where things are as you paint.



**06 Start the skin** Now you need to duplicate the layer, Ctrl/right-click and select Duplicate, then select Create Clipping Mask to help you stay in the lines. Now select a Soft Round brush at 12% Opacity. This helps even things out as you paint. Pick a midtone skin colour and begin to shade in her body.



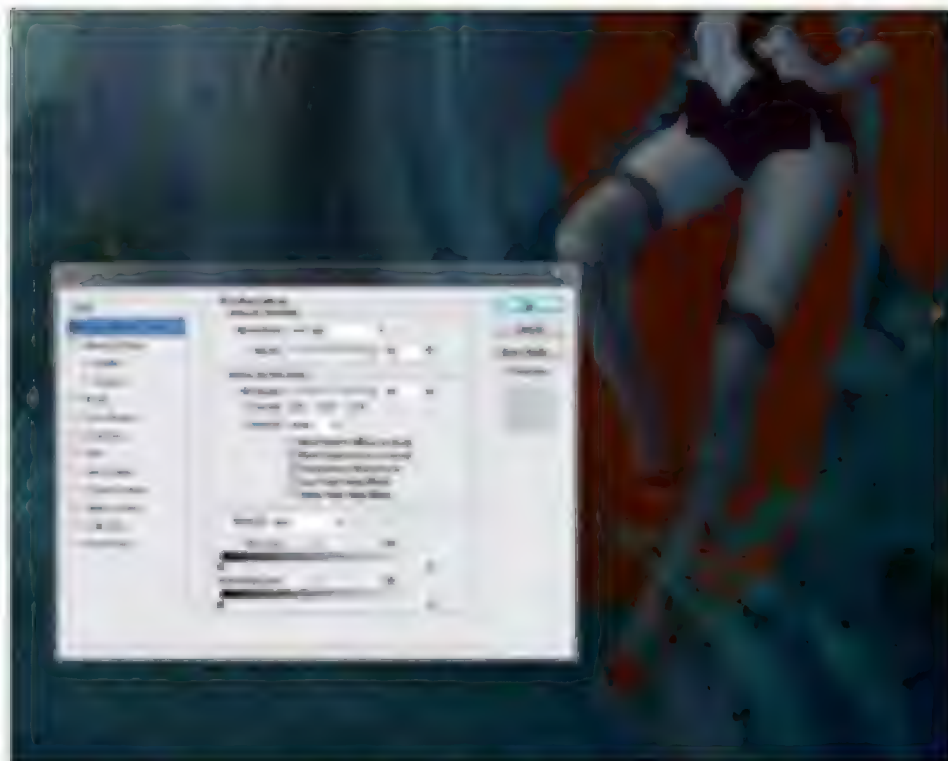
**07 Layer for detail** Even though her clothes will cover some parts, you can still paint all of the skin underneath. This helps a great deal if you need to move some clothing or decide to redesign a part of her costume along the way. Keep adding more layers of midtones to help keep the fleshy look, as sticking to one colour is likely to render it lifeless.



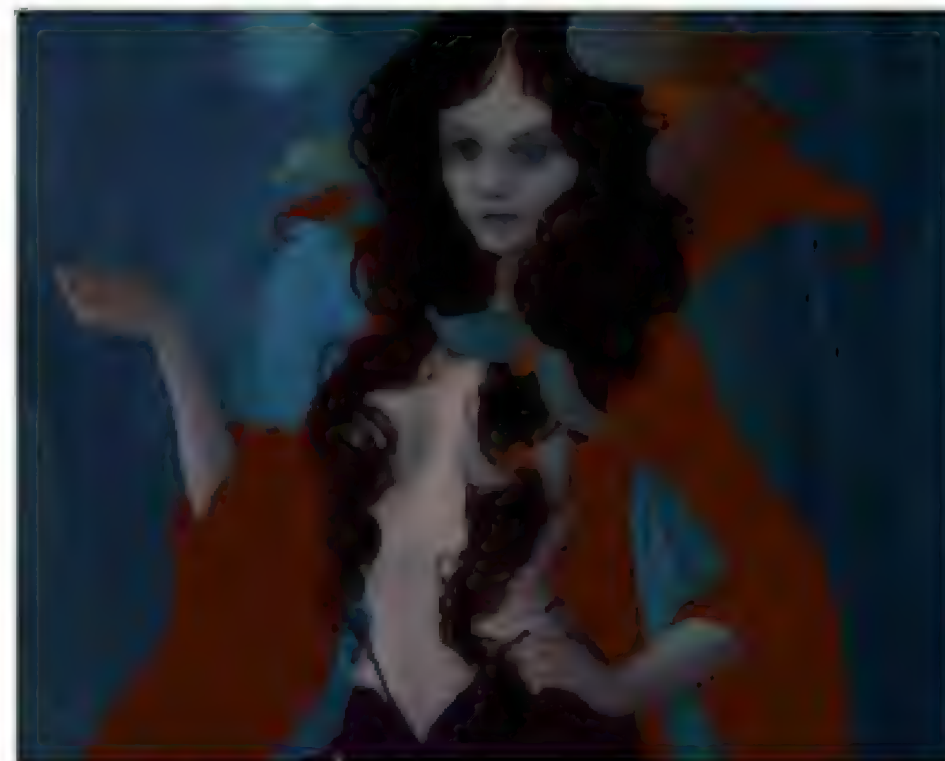
## TONAL VALUES

Don't forget to check your tonal values. Add another new layer, select the Paint Bucket tool with white, fill the whole canvas and then click on Layer Properties. You can now set this to the Color blend mode and this will make changes easier. Leave this layer so you can toggle it on and off.

**08 Blocking in** Go ahead and pick out the colours you want for the clothing, hair and hair accessories. Now create a base for each just like you did with the skin, as this will help with applying the shadows later on. Use a Hard Round brush at 100% Opacity. Use a different layer for each different element.



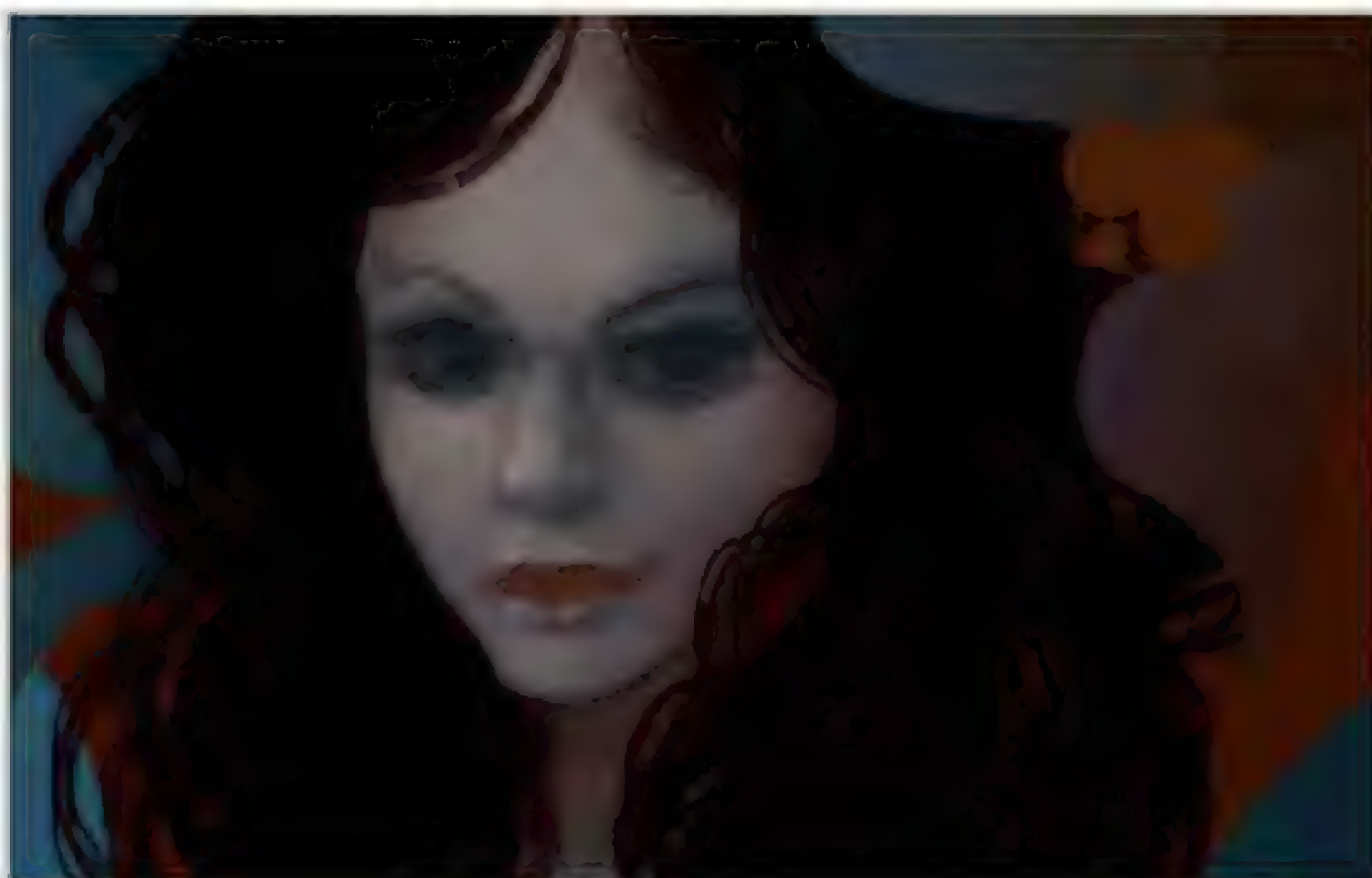
**09 Paint the stockings** When you get to the stockings, create a clipping mask on top of the skin layer. This helps keep the stocking perfectly within the shape of her legs. Pick your colour and set the brush Opacity to 40%. You can also set the layer to Soft Light mode if it helps.



**10 Shading** Now that you have all your colours blocked in you can start shading the skin more. It's easier now since you can see where all the shadows will be from the clothing. Keep adding tones until you are satisfied with the overall look. You can go back later on and put in the details.



**11 Skin colours** If you still think the skin is a little flat and you are not comfortable adding coloured paint over the shaded area, there is an easy fix. Add another clipping mask on top of that layer and set it to the Color blend mode. Use a low-opacity brush and gently paint in the colours of your choice.



**12 Work on the face** Now you can start working on the face. This part alone can take a while and requires a lot of attention and time. Make sure you stick with the same colours you used for the rest of the body. Use a midtone and start sculpting out her features.

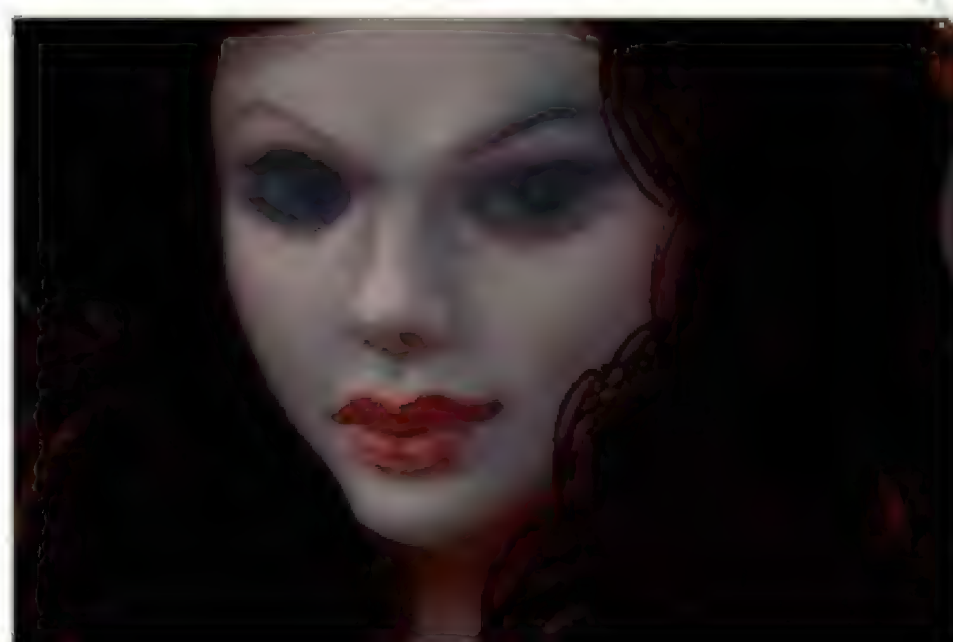


**13 Lips** Once you've done that you can start on the lips. Start with a flat, fairly dark colour and make sure the brush tip is soft enough. Now add a lighter colour to begin giving the lips some depth. Search the internet or your art books for references if you need a bit of help at this stage. The top lip is usually darker than the bottom one, so we painted it in slightly darker tones. Be careful to keep her expression right here.



### LAYER LABEL

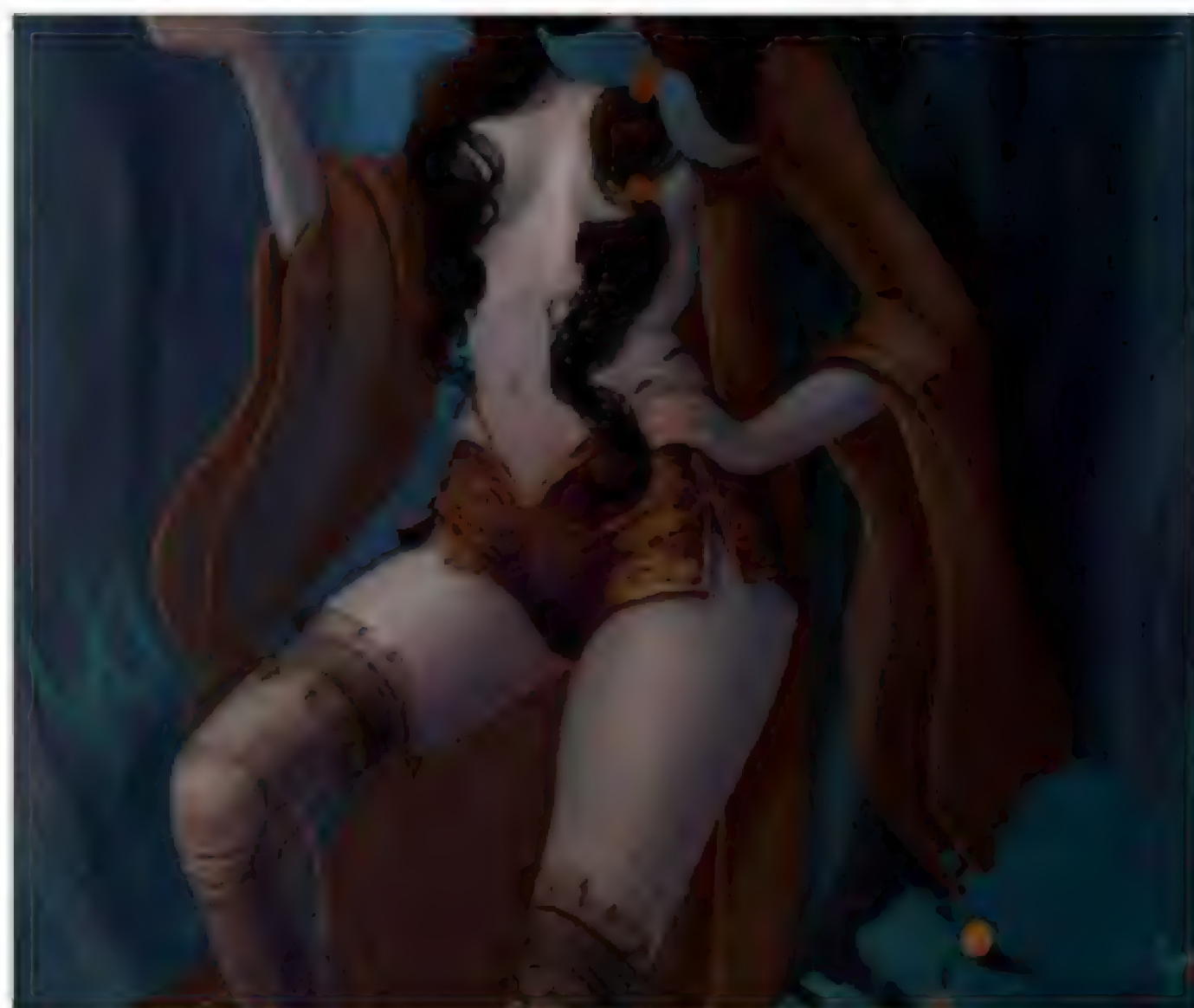
It is a good idea to name your layers as you create them. If you have over 200 layers and nothing is labelled you will end up spending a lot of time checking each layer to find the one you need!



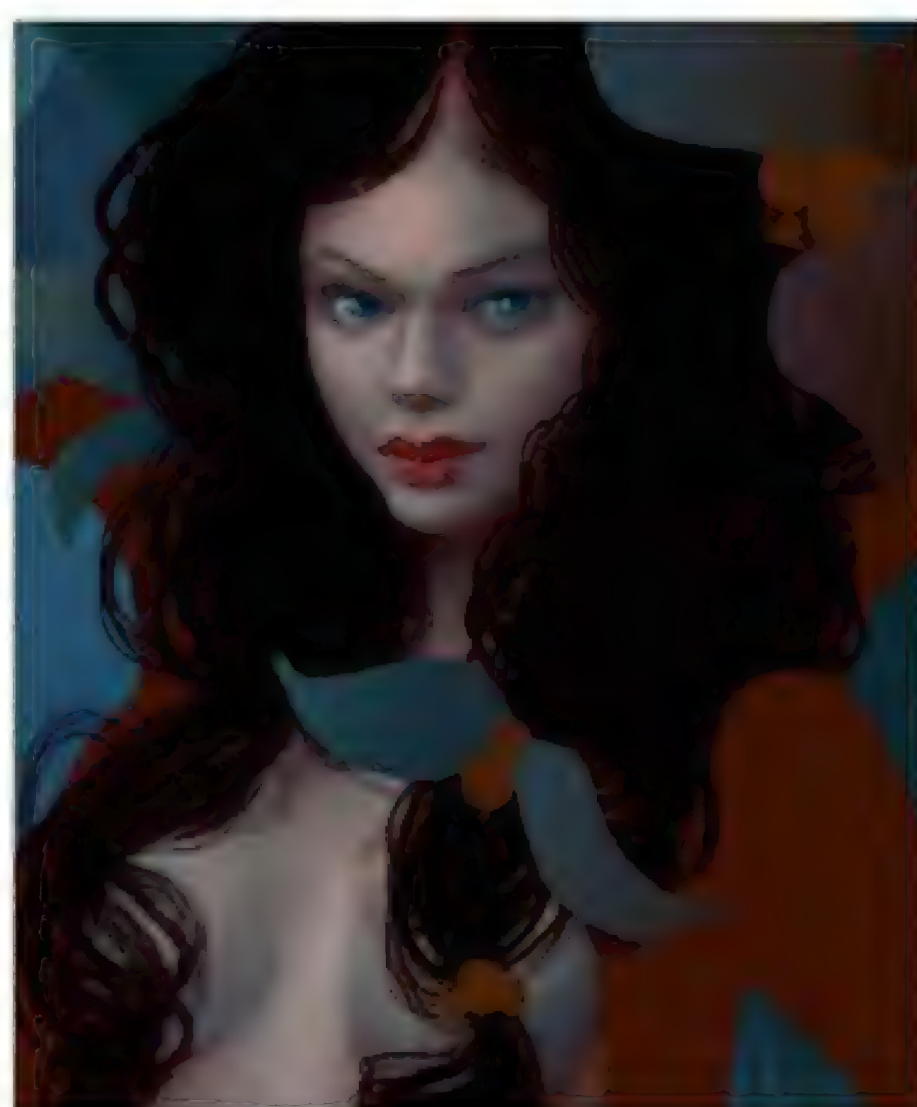
**14 Shape the nose** Let's start shaping up the nose now. A good way to help you keep the shape and shading realistic is to get a mirror and reference your own nose as you're working!

### 17 Robe and accessories

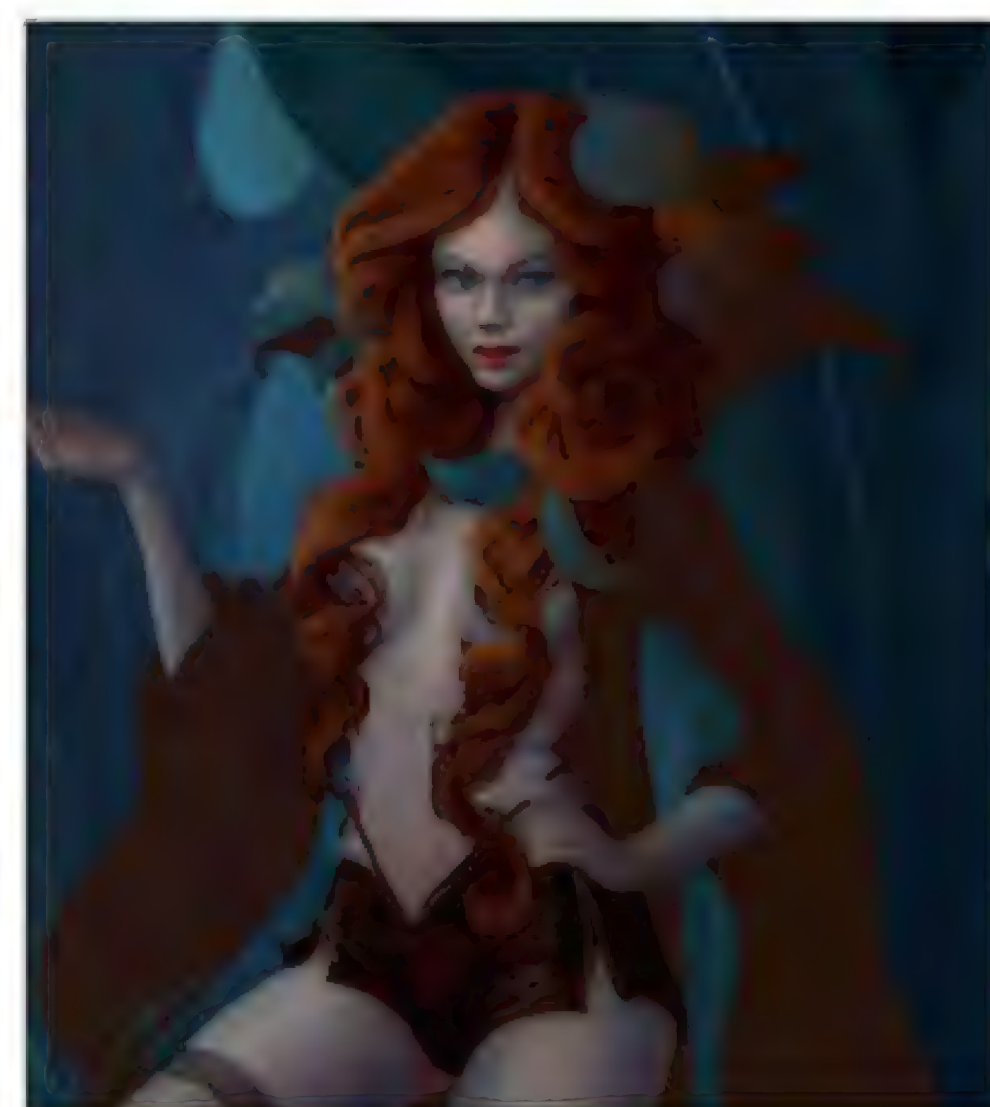
Pick a colour that is two shades lighter than the base of your robe. Use a low-opacity brush and start blending in the tonal values to create some highlights and a sense of movement in the fabric. Do the same for the rest of the clothing then start adding some patterning and detail on her garments. Use a low-opacity eraser to remove areas and make it look more realistic. You can also set this layer to Soft Light or Overlay.



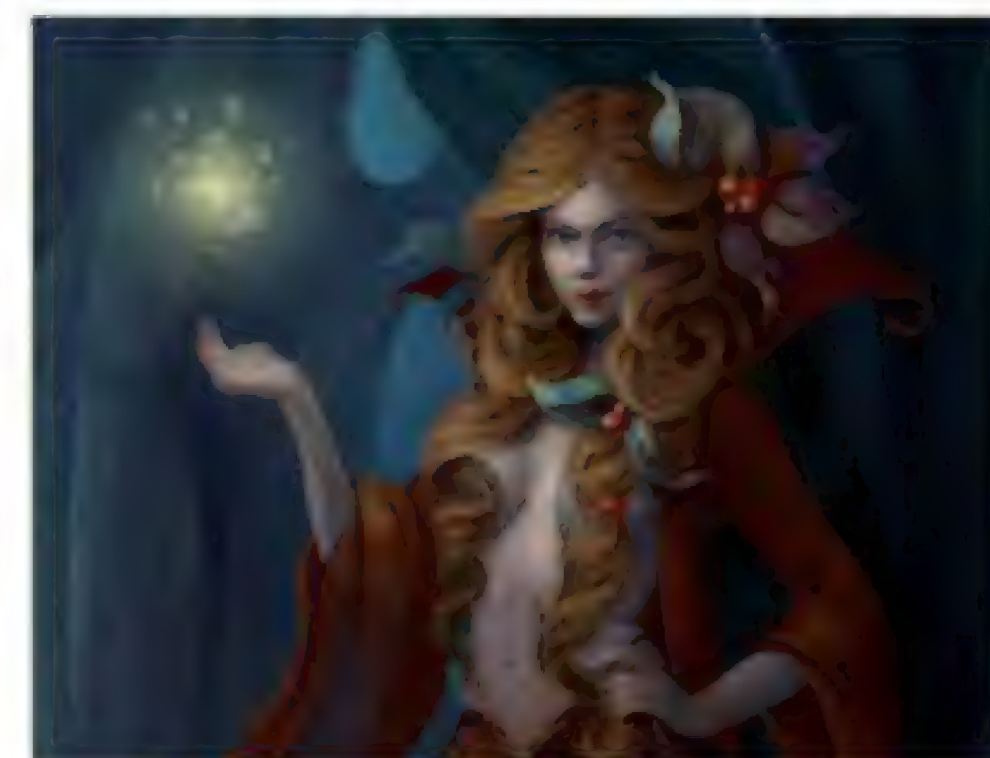
**19 Cat and sprites** Use a base colour for the cat and then go through the same process as you did for the clothing. The hair is also rendered in the same way but using smaller strokes. For the sprites, use a soft brush with a lighter colour and build up strokes to make them glow.



**15 Final features** For the eyes you need a soft brush and a light colour. Set the brush Opacity to 7% and, very lightly, paint in the whites of her eyes to begin with. Now take a Hard Round brush and add in the bottom eyelids.



**16 Build tones** For the hair, start out with the darkest tones. Once you have the base down you will have a better idea of where the bigger strands will be. Pick a lighter tone and work in the bigger strands. Repeat this until you have finished even the tiniest parts.



**18 Highlights** Now you can start applying your highlights to the skin. You don't have to go into too much detail just yet, just enough to get the general mapping together. Try to match the highlight colours to the background's highlight. You can add more hues to make the skin seem more alive as well.



**20 Colour and detail** Go back and double-check your image. If a certain area is lacking colour, use another layer set to Color mode to fix it. And don't forget to flip your image as this helps point out your mistakes. If everything looks good then you are now finished with your witch image!



# The essential guide for 3D enthusiasts

## Inside each issue...

- **Inspirational tutorials** Professional artists share their techniques for creating 3D
- **Fantastic features** Learn about a subject in depth, or find out about an artist
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# Tutorial

Elves and how to draw them



high elf



wood elf





# Elves and how to draw them

**Jonatan Iversen-Ejve** shows how to design elven characters

Elves and How to Draw Them

*Photoshop*



CYBERPUNK  
elf



DARK ELF



FESTIVE  
elf



### JONATAN IVERSEN-EJVE

Artist info



[einen.deviantart.com](http://einen.deviantart.com)

I am a freelance digital artist from Stockholm, Sweden, specialising in humorous and colourful illustrations and character designs. Besides having a soft spot for fantasy art, I also love drawing silly looking animals.



Out of all the different races in modern fantasy fiction, the elf is arguably one of the most popular and recognisable. It's not only likely but also probable that they'll pop up as one of the central characters. But you shouldn't consider the elf as one stock character, as there are many different incarnations of the race with their own traits and attributes. They can be as diverse as night and day. In fact, some of them only share the pointy, elongated ears as their common feature, which you can clearly see by comparing the noble high elf with the equally well-known festive elf; chalk and cheese apart from the ears.

The design of the modern elf is taken, like so many other fantasy elements, from old mythology and fairytales. JRR Tolkien, who more or less introduced the view of elves

in modern fantasy, took his inspiration from Norse folklore among other things. Before his fiction became popular and elves came to be considered a fair and noble people, they were more often than not depicted as evil and dangerous creatures, similar to faeries or trolls in the way that they could trick and torment human beings.

Generally speaking, when designing an elf you would make them tall, slim and often beautiful. As long as you keep the aforementioned pointy ears, however, you can be a lot more creative with your character design. A wood elf may no longer belong to the forest if you take away his bow and green clothes. A festive elf might not get to keep his job at the North Pole if you lock him out of his workshop. But take away the pointy ears from an elf, and it's not really considered an elf any more.



## Create the lineup

### How to design elves with personality

**01 High elf** One of your more stereotypical elves, the high elf is tall, slim and pale. He wears fancy armour and clothing, signalling his high-born status. These elves were originally invented by JRR Tolkien based on his research into Norse myths; they are guardians of peace and tranquillity, fighters of evil and keepers of ancient wisdom.



**02 Wood elf** Another Tolkien invention, the wood elf is shorter and more muscular than the high elf, but still a lean and athletic figure. He lives deep in the forest where he hones his hunting skills and lives very closely with nature. Usually designed in clothing with earthy tones to blend in with the trees, the wood elf always has his trusty bow by his side whether that's to feed himself or fend off enemies.

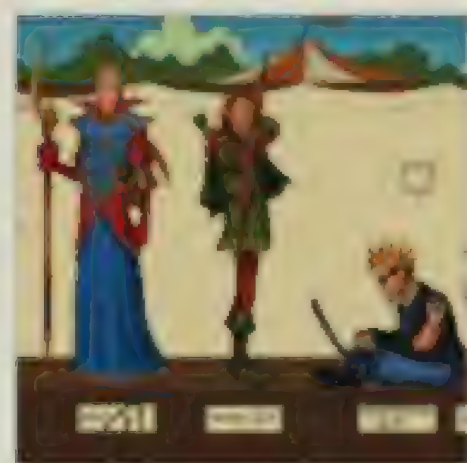
**03 Cyberpunk elf** The cyberpunk elf stands out from the rest with his punk Mohawk, modern accessories and biker-like clothes. They are imagined as mutated humans who have taken on the capabilities of traditional high elves but in a dystopian future world. Notice that the tattoo on his arm has same design as the high elf's armour crest.



### WORKING PROGRESS



Step 06, The sketch



Step 08, Shading



Step 10, Final touches



## BE WHIMSICAL

Don't be afraid of trying out weird things! Making a standard design can be good, but sometimes you can improve it by adding in something unexpected. Perhaps this could be a pattern that would otherwise be considered out of place or an unusual choice of clothing.

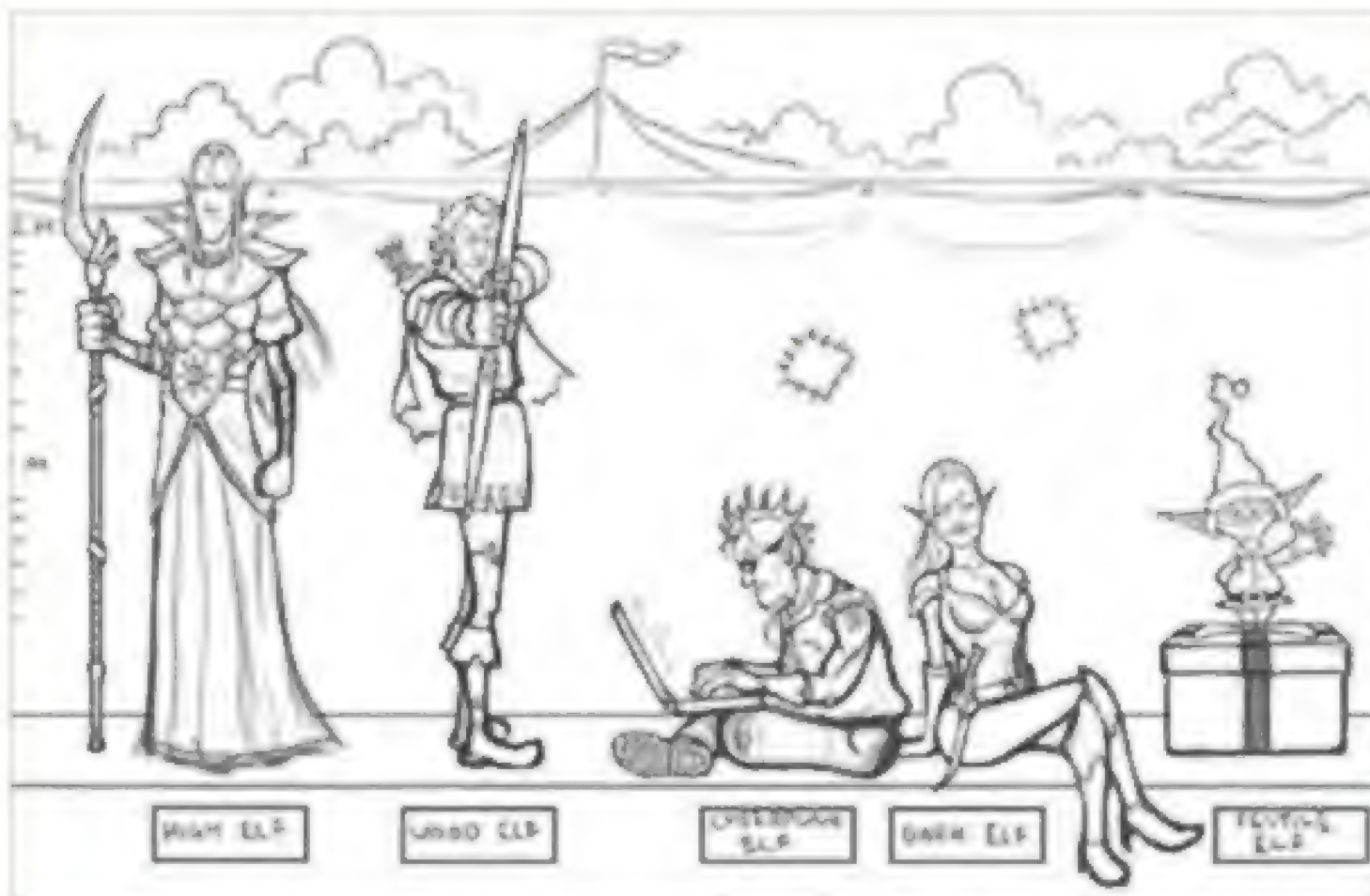
### 04 Dark elf

This elf has dark, greyish skin, white hair and long, pointy ears. She is generally considered evil by nature, and should be designed with that in mind. The dark elves were split from the high elves through an act of evil and they now live underground or in mountain caves. They make excellent assassins, but their magic can be very powerful as well.



### 05 Festive elf

The festive elf is different in that he has a much more light-hearted and comedic design. He is very tiny, has really long ears and is almost designed more like a gnome. These elves are an American marketing invention and are often depicted as Santa's little helpers who live at the North Pole and make toys for children.



**06 The sketch** First sketch out the whole illustration, with each element on its own layer. Keep the general descriptions of the elves in mind, and try to make them as unique as possible with their own individual traits.

**08 Shading** Now start painting highlights and shadows on each colour layer, still working beneath the line art. Keep in mind that it's generally easier to paint light colours over dark.

## FLIP THE IMAGE

Flipping the image horizontally from time to time helps you to identify irregularities, problems with composition and other things you wouldn't normally consider. If you are satisfied with both the flipped and original version of your painting, you will be happier with the final result.

## USE COLOURS

Colours are your friends, and you should use them! This might seem like a bit of a no-brainer, but sometimes you can fall into the trap of a gloomy palette without realising it. Nice colours can make your illustration stand out so experiment with Color Balance and Hue/Saturation adjustments.

**07 Basic colours** After you're satisfied with your sketch, paint some dark, basic colours on new layers beneath the line art. Give each character and element their own layer, as this will simplify the process. These simple colours will work as guidelines for the rest of the painting.





# Tutorial

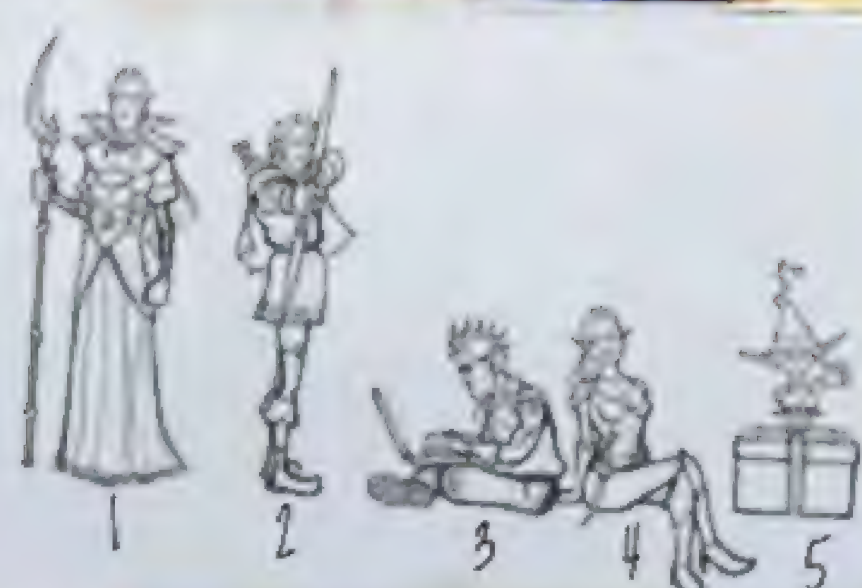
Elves and how to draw them

## 09 Overpainting

Now it is time to start painting the finer details over the line art. This is most likely the biggest step of the process as it can take a long time to get all of the smaller elements as you'd like them. It is important to zoom back out in increments to make sure it's all looking good. At this stage it can also be beneficial to merge the line art and base colour layers of a character to work on one single layer, since it makes it easier to shape it to your liking using features such as Liquify.



**10 Final touches** In this final stage you will add adjustment layers on top of your painting, tweaking with Brightness/Contrast and Color Balance until you're happy with the tones and hues across the image. This step could be done at any time, but is best left until last.

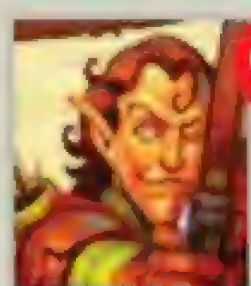


## KEY TECHNIQUES



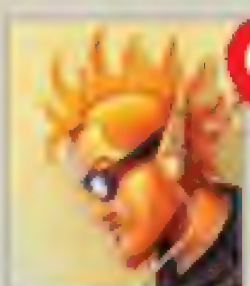
**01** The high elf is the tallest of the group and wears the most ornate

armor. His expression hints at his solemn and ancient nature. His armor and spear show that he is prepared to fight, but his robes suggest he would be happier in a garden, library or hall.



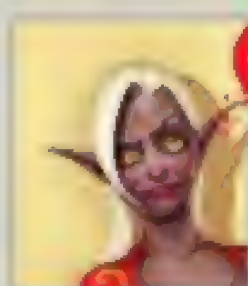
**02** The wood elf is dressed in earthy green and brown colours, and

this shows that he has the closest bond to nature of all the elves. He sports a bow to show his magical, excellent marksmanship and ability to survive in the wild, and has a tall and lean figure.



**03** Here the cyberpunk elf is the only elf dressed in modern

clothes, and with piercings in his pointy ears. His expression and clothing reflect the dystopian future he comes from and his accessories hint at a close relationship with electronic devices.



**04** The dark elf has the darkest skin of them all, and dresses in

revealing yet elegant outfits. Her mischievous expression hints at the mean streak of her race, which is evil by nature. The dagger at her side shows that she may very well be an assassin.



**05** These elves are very different to their more serious elven

brethren, as their stature and festive clothing shows. With a permanent smile on his face, the festive elf comes off as a friendly and joyful creature. The big present represents his generous nature.





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# Tutorial

Create fantasy from photos

## JENNIFER CIRPICI

Artist info



[www.breakingcanvas.com](http://www.breakingcanvas.com)

Jennifer is a self-taught graphic designer and illustrator from the Netherlands. She studied graphic design, has worked for several big agencies like Saatchi & Saatchi and Leo Burnett, and is currently a freelance digital artist.





# Create fantasy from photos

**Jennifer Cirpici** takes you through the process of creating this Hollywood-inspired environment

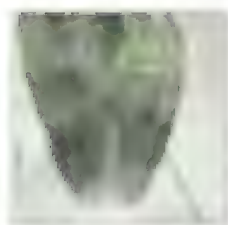
Fantasy World

*Photoshop*

What

you will learn in this tutorial are several basic but essential techniques like blending, colouring and painting over a scene comprising multiple photos. This workshop is fundamentally inspired by the lush mountainous scenery in the movie *Avatar*. The Zhangjiajie Mountains, located in China, inspired the makers of *Avatar* to create the floating Hallelujah Mountains; they also inspired us and we used stock imagery of this range to create this artwork. We'll go into how you can combine real and painted elements (the essence of matte painting) in depth.

Over the course of these steps we'll also look at how you can blend stock easily and how essential colouring is when it comes to setting an atmosphere. This guide will not only help you to create these *Avatar*-esque floating mountains, but also to improve your future photomanipulations. Unlike the scenes created for the film, we will only be using Photoshop to achieve these effects. We recommend, however, that you look up the inspiring *Avatar* scenes first, or better still, (re)watch the movie to get a few ideas for the composition and tone of the piece.



## Create a lush environment

Manage your stock, colours and blending

### WORKING PROGRESS



Step 01, Stock search



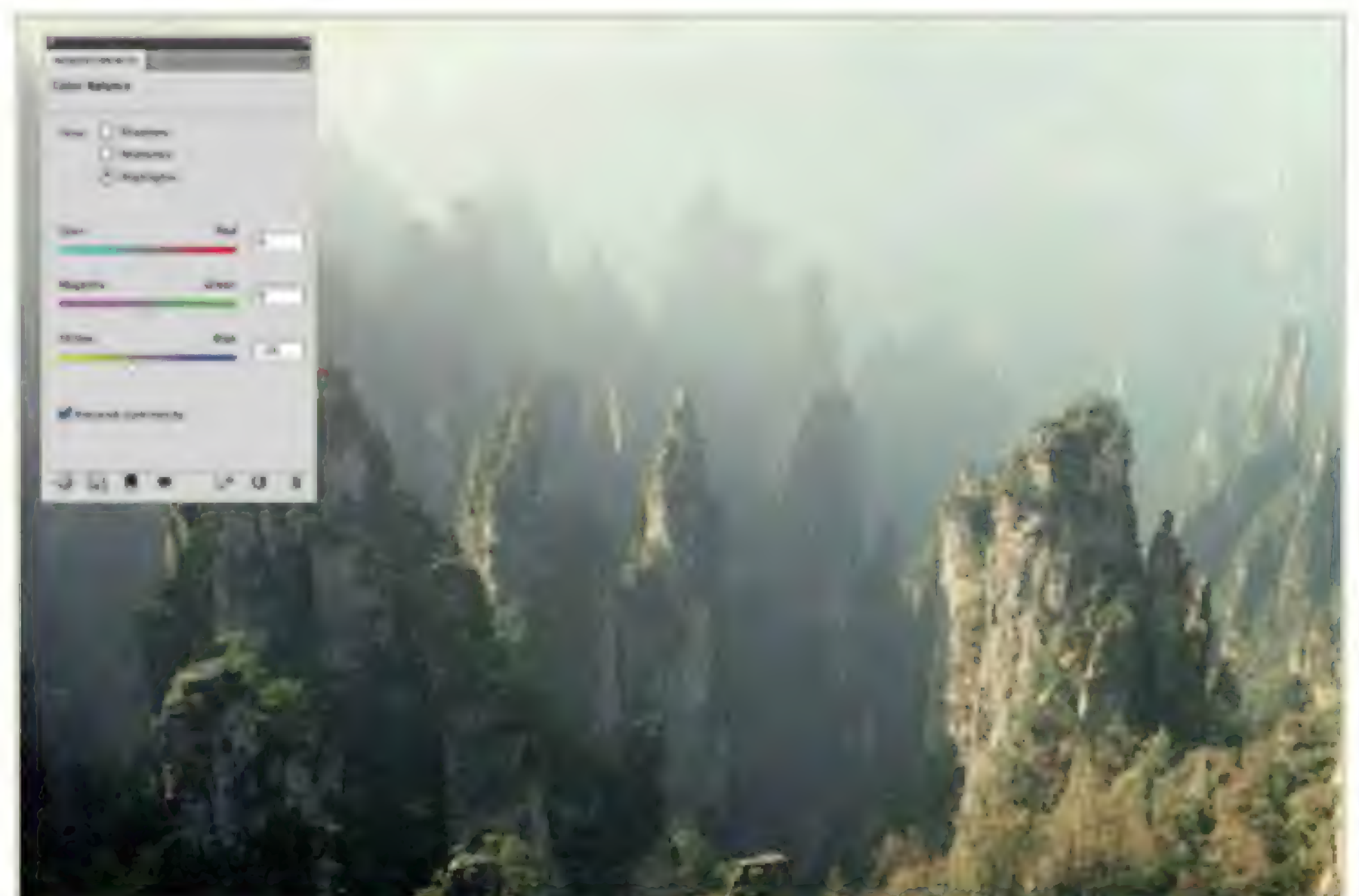
Step 02, Shadows and accents



Step 03, More mist



**01 Stock search** The first step is to find some high-quality mountain stock images to begin your piece. The sky is white in our image and we want to add some clouds, so we search for good sky photos, paste them over the landscape, then blend using layer masks as well as the Overlay, Multiply and Normal modes.



**02 Bring in some colour** For a green tint, create a new layer filled with #f6f6e5 and set to Multiply. Now create a new layer set to Multiply, but fill this with a bluish gradient at 36% Opacity. Use Curves to up the contrast and tweak the greens with a Color Balance adjustment.





**03 Mountains and birds** We now add in some mountains from another stock photo. Set the layer's blending mode to Multiply with an Opacity of 68%, then make the mountains a little greyer so that they all blend well together. Blur the mountains using the Gaussian Blur filter set to a Radius of 5px because they are further away and this will create a greater sense of depth. Finally, find some nice bird images and paste them into the composition, using the Edit>Transform options to match the scene's perspective and scale.



### TAKE A BREAK

You may find that you get stuck sometimes, and lose inspiration or motivation to continue with your artwork. Some of the best solutions are to either sleep on it, take a couple of steps back from your screen or, as we did in this tutorial, just change the perspective by flipping it horizontally.

**05 Gradient shading** Select the floating mountain and, with a black-to-transparent gradient, create a shadow at the bottom of the scene, fading out towards the top of the image. Lower the Opacity to 28% and repeat this step. Select parts of the mountains from the background and paste into the bottom to give it more texture. We'll go into more depth with this in a moment. At this stage, it's a good idea to take a final look and check you're happy with the composition. To do this, go to Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal.

**06 Depth and highlights** To create depth and highlights, we use a small, hard brush, painting with black where we want to generate a bit more shadow. We set this layer to the Soft Light blending mode and lowered the Opacity to around 70% with the brush Flow at 70% too. Follow the same process with a hard white brush, this time creating highlights with the layer set to Overlay. You can use this technique with all your photomanipulation projects to great effect.

**04 Floating mountains** With the help of CGTextures ([www.cgtextures.com](http://www.cgtextures.com)), we source some free landscape stock images and blend them together to produce a mountain reminiscent of those in *Avatar*. This is very much a matter of artistic licence so you will have to decide on the scale, shape and which materials constitute your mountain when you come to constructing it. As previously demonstrated, use layer masks to bring elements together, as this will help to blend effectively using black and white brushes. Also, make sure that when you are using these brushes you are working with a low Flow value as this will help to achieve a smooth blend.







## Make the fantastical real

The secret is in the details



**07 Add some clouds** To add realism to the floating mountain and to establish its significant scale and airborne position, we imported some clouds, placing them around the bottom of the mountain. Render the clouds with channels, put them on a new layer and then invert it (Cmd/Ctrl+I). Now select the black parts (the clouds) with the Magic Wand tool and erase the rest. Blur the clouds with Filter>Motion Blur to lend them a greater sense of movement.



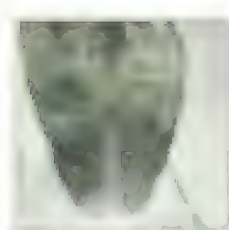
**08 Shadows, accents and eerie mist** As this project goes on, and the more that you work on the mountain, the more likely you are to notice that it requires more details. At this stage, for example, we decide that this image needs more shadows and highlights. Repeat step 6 and go into more detail using a smaller brush. It's time-consuming work, but this effort will pay dividends when it comes to the final result. To generate a mist effect, take a soft brush, sample the colour from the background with the Eyedropper tool and brush over the mountain and background before switching to Soft Light blending.

**09 Add some plants** In *Avatar*, the floating islands have long vine-like plants to help people move from one island to another, and we're also creating these in our scene. Take a hard brush and draw some simple lines to get the basic plant forms from one mountain to another. Then, with a green colour, add more lines over the first set and then a final group of lines in a lighter tone for shading. You can also set some of the lines to Overlay.



**10 Mountain vegetation** We are now going to add some shady plants to the bottom of the scene and around the base of the floating mountain. You can do this very simply by taking the hard brush again and, with a grey colour, drawing in plants that are hanging down. The trick is that they don't have to look exactly like plants when zoomed in, but when you zoom out they should look convincingly like the silhouettes of trees or shrubs. You only have to make these plants as complicated as you want to.





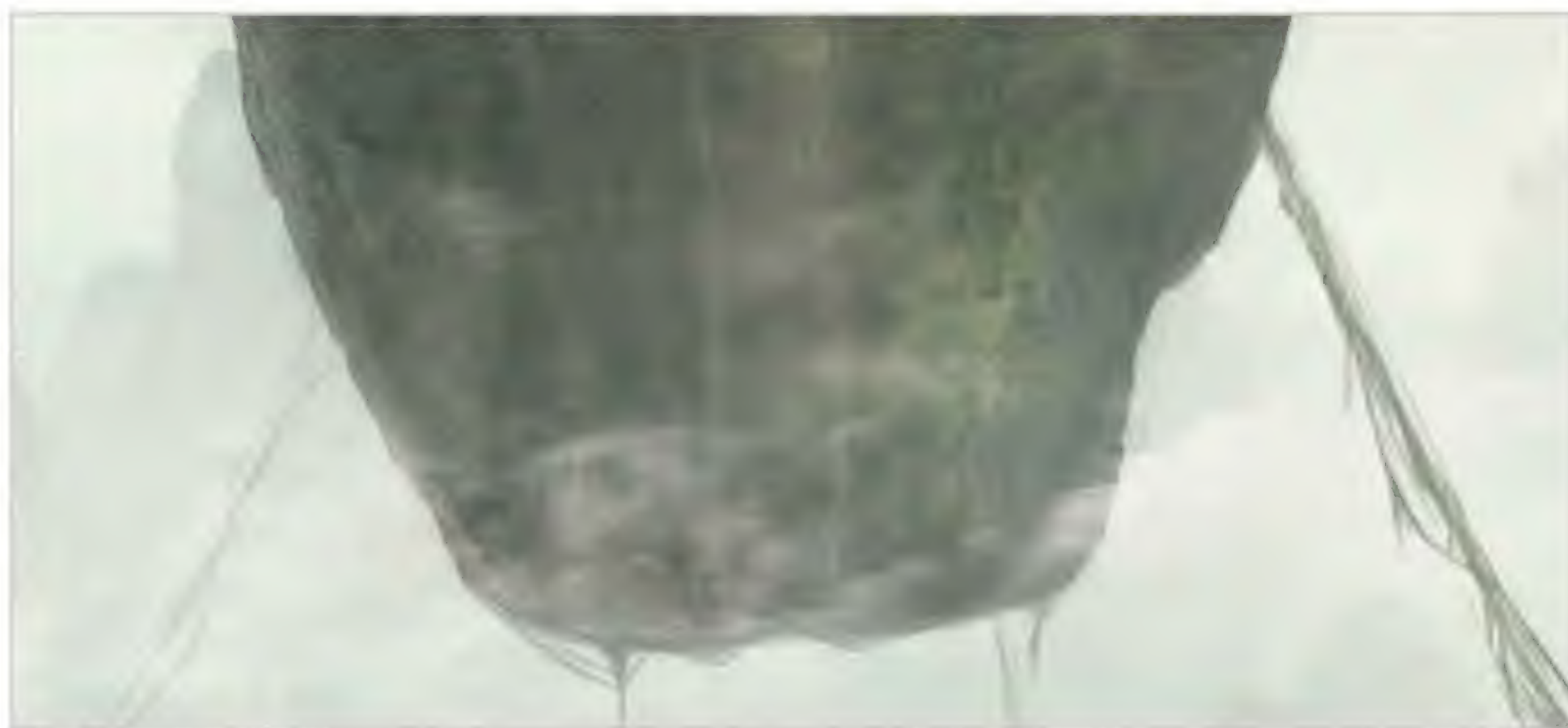
## The final touches

Wrap up your fantasy world



**11 Additional highlights** We come again to a point when we're adding more highlights – you can never get enough of them! The more you have, the more detail there will be in your scene and the better it will ultimately look. We're also adding a bit of green here and there with a hard brush. By doing this we are giving it a more digitally painted feeling, but don't forget to make sure that everything blends well together, with no one area stealing the show.

**13 Splash out** Before making a waterfall, look up some references to get an idea of the basic structure. As you will see, there isn't too much detail in a waterfall – it's basically a white cloud. Take a soft brush at around 150px, brush a thick line in white and then apply Soft Light blending at 25% Opacity. This is the start of the waterfall and shows how it's floating. We now add a couple of finer lines either side of the waterfall to serve as edges.



**14 Waterfall details** With a soft brush sized around 500px, brush once more into the waterfall, but lower the Opacity to 28% and set the blending mode to Soft Light. For details, zoom in and use a hard brush to make a couple of small strokes and then, on a new layer, add a series of lines. If they look too hard, you can blur them a bit. Add vertical lines until satisfied then apply some smoky mist underneath the cascade.

### 12 Mountain edges

Because we could never have rendered the rock in a way that made the plants at the edges look good too, we need to add our own flora to the mountain edges. This will better blend the mountain into the sky and reduce that copy/paste feel. Again, you don't have to paint the plants or leaves very realistically as they're in the distance and shrouded by mist. Make sure not to use one colour – always add in highlight and shadow tones too.



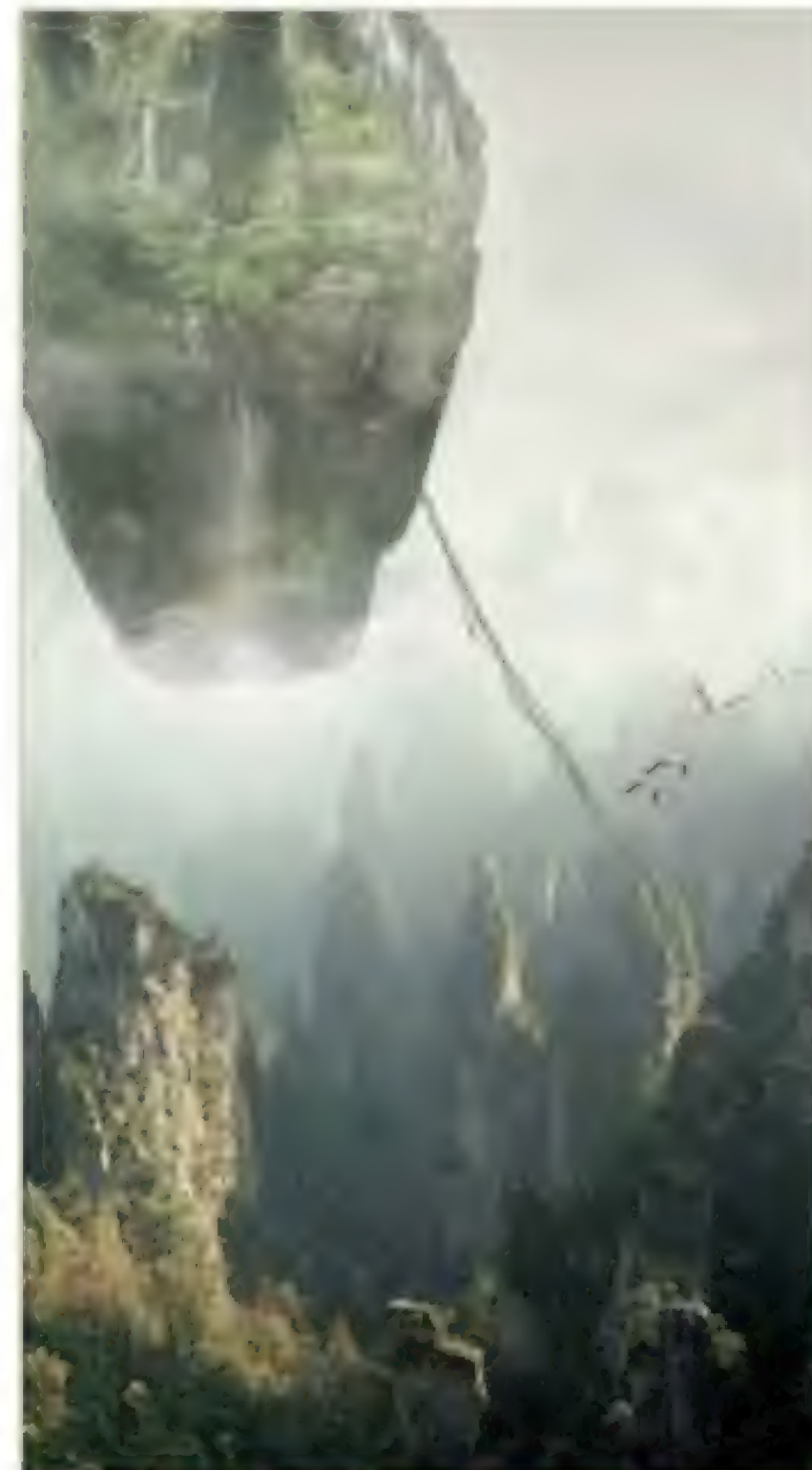
### 15 Rainbow effect

Waterfalls can often be seen with a rainbow near them due to light refracting through the moving water. Create a subtle rainbow with your hard brush, as per the screenshot, lowering the Opacity to 80%. Change the layer to the Soft Light mode and apply a Gaussian blur so that the rainbow doesn't draw too much attention. With the soft brush set to the Soft Light mode, add a little more mist coming off the waterfall.

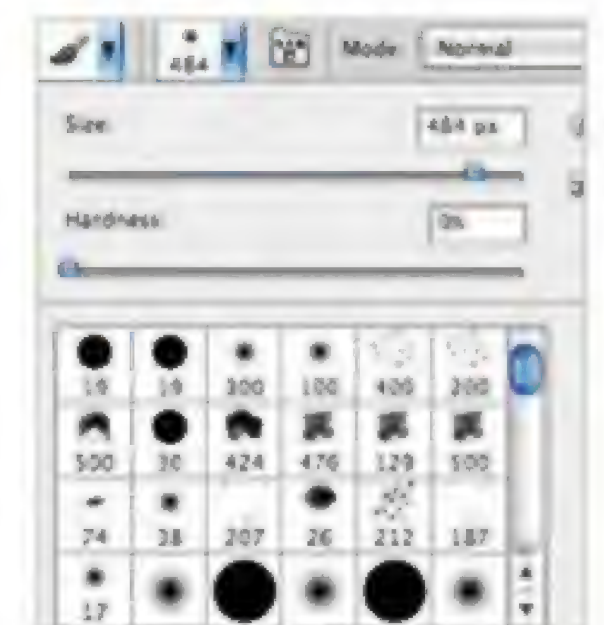




**16 Mountain shadow** Because it's a floating mountain, we need to add its shadow to the area it's suspended over. We decided to put some shadow on the rocky column closest to it and on the ground using the soft brush set to black at a lowered opacity. Make sure you never do just one shadow – for realism, apply several layers of shadow that become darker the closer they get to the object. Don't mess too much with the blending options when it comes to shadows, either, as they need to be almost completely black.



**17 More mist** As one of the final steps, we are going to add yet more mist around the floating mountain and make the vegetation around the edges a little greener. The mist will help the mountain merge seamlessly with everything else in the scene and it also enhances the surreal and mysterious mood we want the image to have. Never make your mist too white, though. Instead use a colour in the same shade as the background, so in this case give it a green tint. Switch the mist layer to the Soft Light blending mode and set the Opacity to 30%.



## THE ROTATE VIEW TOOL

When you digitally paint, you can use the Rotate View tool to navigate your whole screen. This way you can paint more detailed elements without having to turn your head. It makes everything much more comfortable.



## 18 Final touches

Now you can play with Brightness/Contrast, Levels and Curves adjustment layers. To get focus in this artwork you can also create a black-to-white radial gradient on a new layer set to Soft Light and 30% Opacity. The white circle goes wherever you want to draw focus. Create a new layer, fill it with black and go to Filter > Noise > Add Noise (12.5% and Monochromatic). Set this layer to Soft Light and just 5% Opacity. Last but not least, wrap up the image with a Smart Sharpen filter.



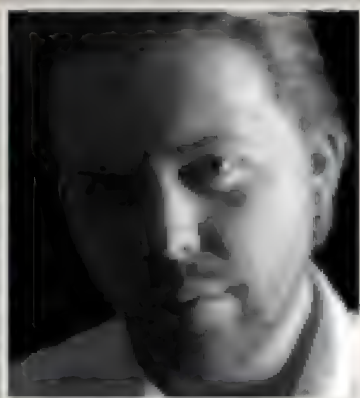
# Tutorial

Colour tricks for heroic characters



## BEN PRENEVOST

Artist info



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Ben is a freelance artist working in comics, games, concept and commercial art. Specialising in digital colouring, he has also worked as a graphic artist and dabbles in most visual and media arts. Ben is also currently developing his own fantasy graphic novel.



# Colour tricks for heroic characters

Ben Prenevost uses a limited palette to colour a mighty barbarian hero

Lizards Lie

Photoshop

Modern-day comics are painted in a plethora of styles from greyscale and flat-colour tones with soft airbrushing to rough, painterly visuals. Each style adds another dimension to the line art it colourises. The cuts-based method of working that we will show you over these pages moulds itself incredibly well to the line art of the superhero genre. With a blend of smooth gradation and sharp cuts of colour, it can be used to greatly enhance the dynamic visuals of the hero comic. With our rendering we'll bring an additional hint of painterly appeal and a sense of comic-book heroism to grab the viewer's attention.

Colour and light play extremely important roles in heroic artwork. Painting with a limited colour palette enables us to set the overall mood and manage the dramatic lighting better. Choosing a dynamic lighting design enhances the mood further, pushes the hero theme and focuses attention where it's needed. Lighting is also used to enable the viewer to see deep into the world we've created by bouncing the light source off distant objects while painting secondary lighting to cradle the forms and create depth.

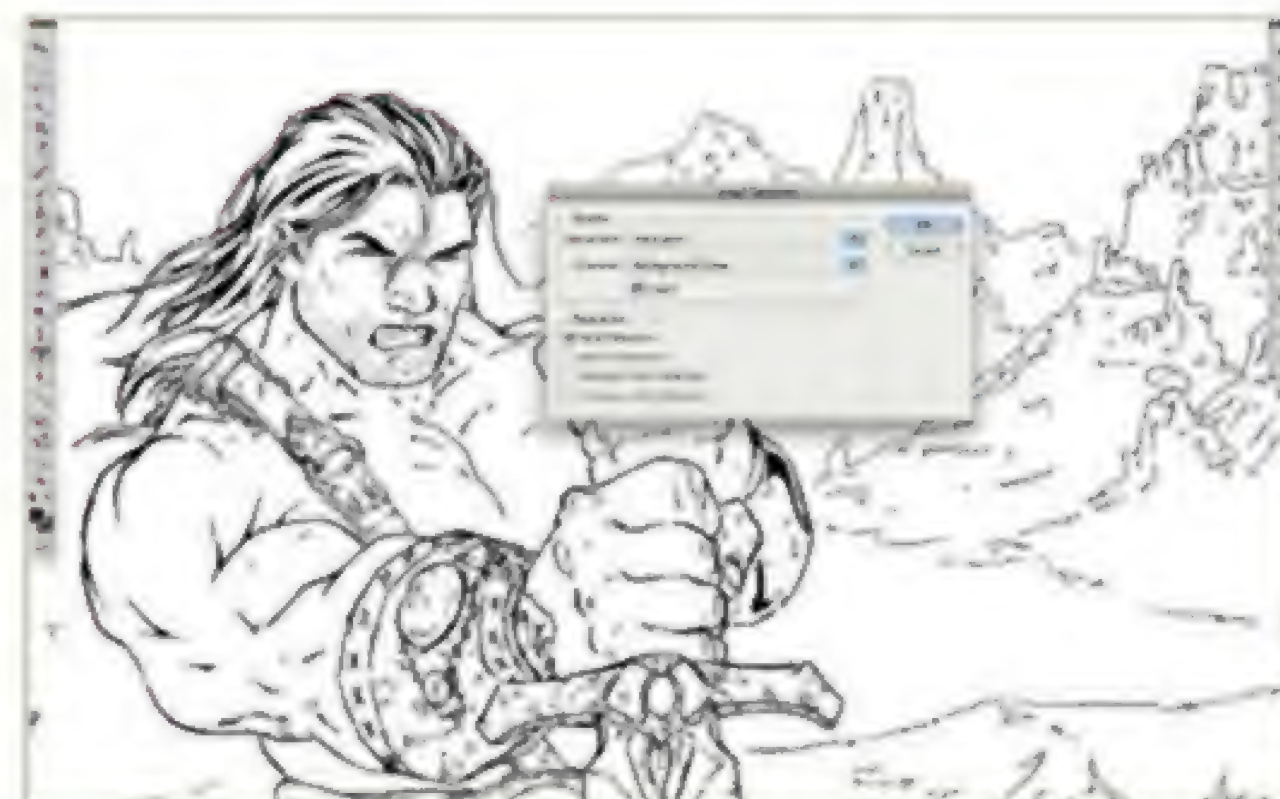
In this piece we're using red tones to radiate the feeling of power and aquamarine as a secondary source to enhance form while pushing the image further into fantasy. As we get closer to the foreground, the red tones will become more intense and detailed, and the blue-green tones will become a little subtler - though the secondary light on the barbarian hero will stay intense. To increase the feeling of space, we'll drop in some blue dust behind the hero and into the canyon. The use of underpainting will help keep the piece uniform while colourising the line art will increase the painterly visual.





## A victorious hero

Walk away unscathed from rough lines to full render

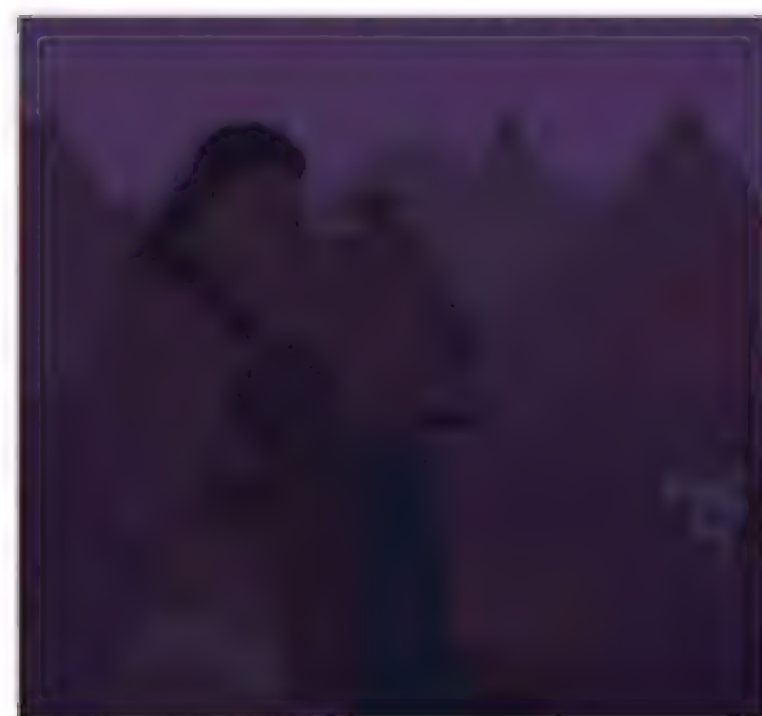


**01 An attack plan** Loosely sketch some layouts within Photoshop. If you sketch at smaller sizes or thumbnails, make sure you use the proper size ratio so you can easily upscale the drawing to your final size. Print out and pencil over your concept sketch or finish the illustration digitally.

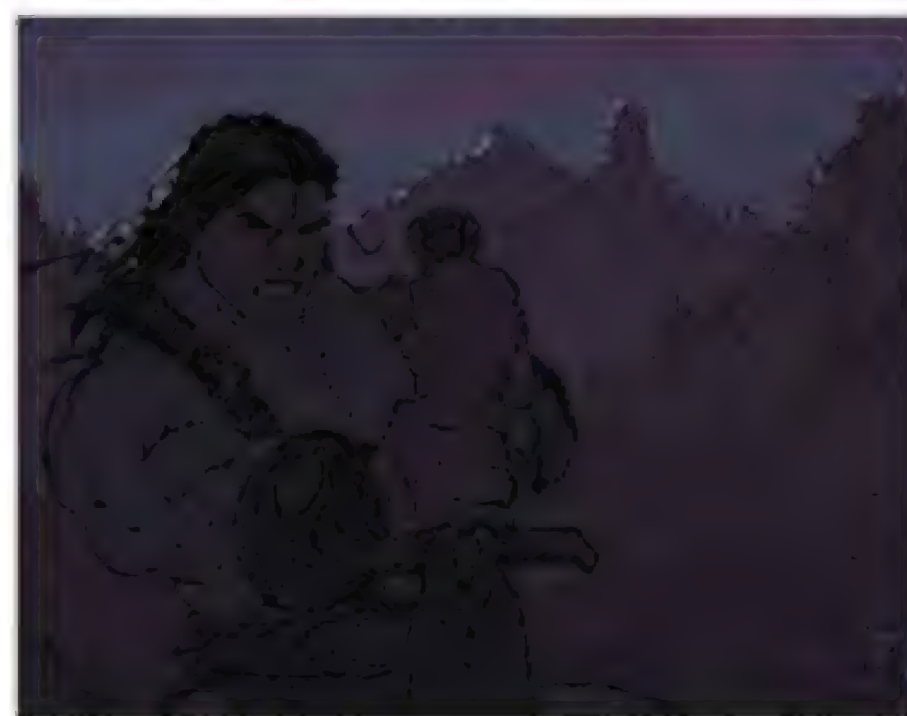
**02 Place your layers** Create a new layer and name it Line Art. From the Select menu choose Load Selection, set the channel to Background Gray, check the Invert option and fill the selection with 100% black. Switch to the Background layer, name it Flats and fill it with white. Convert to RGB mode choosing Don't Flatten.



**03 Block everything** On the Flats layer, we need to make selections for each of the shapes and fill them with a different colour using the Lasso, the Magic Wand and the Paint Bucket tool. Place lighter and muted red tones in the background while increasing saturation and darkness nearer the foreground.



**04 Underpainting** Fill the Flats layer with a dark violet blue at 60% to create the effect of underpainting. This will help create a base to build your colours up. Duplicate the Flats layer naming this Colours. The majority of our rendering will be on this layer.



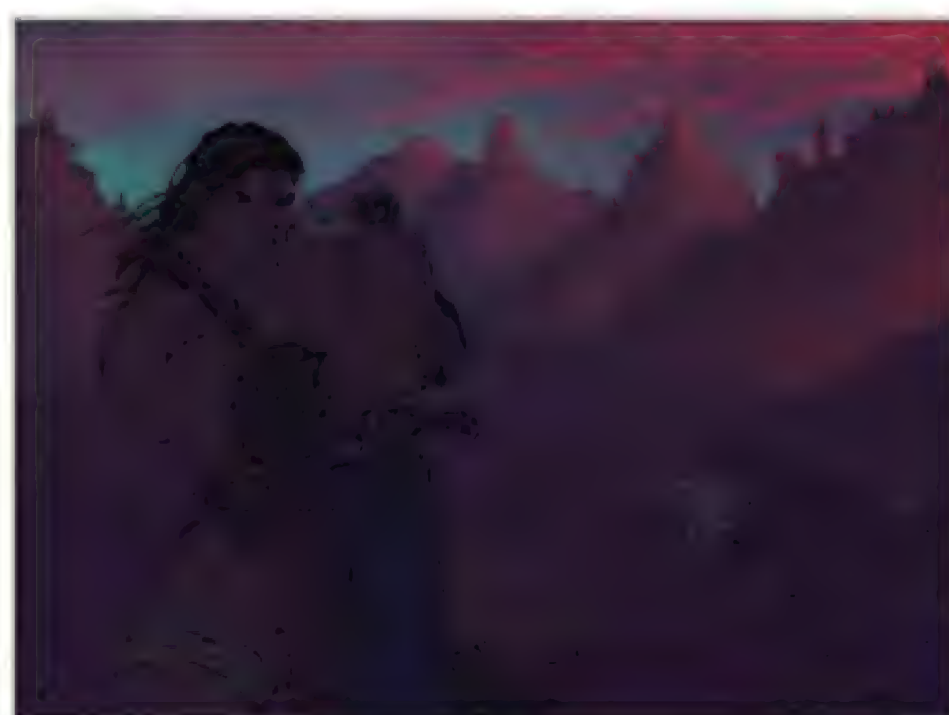
**05 Canyon sunset** The sun is setting on the right side of the image with a blue-green light from the left. Select the sky with the Magic Wand and grab a soft brush set to the Normal blend mode. Build up shapes in red with larger brushes, then use smaller ones to increase the detail. Hit some of the clouds with bright-red paint.

### ADJUSTMENTS

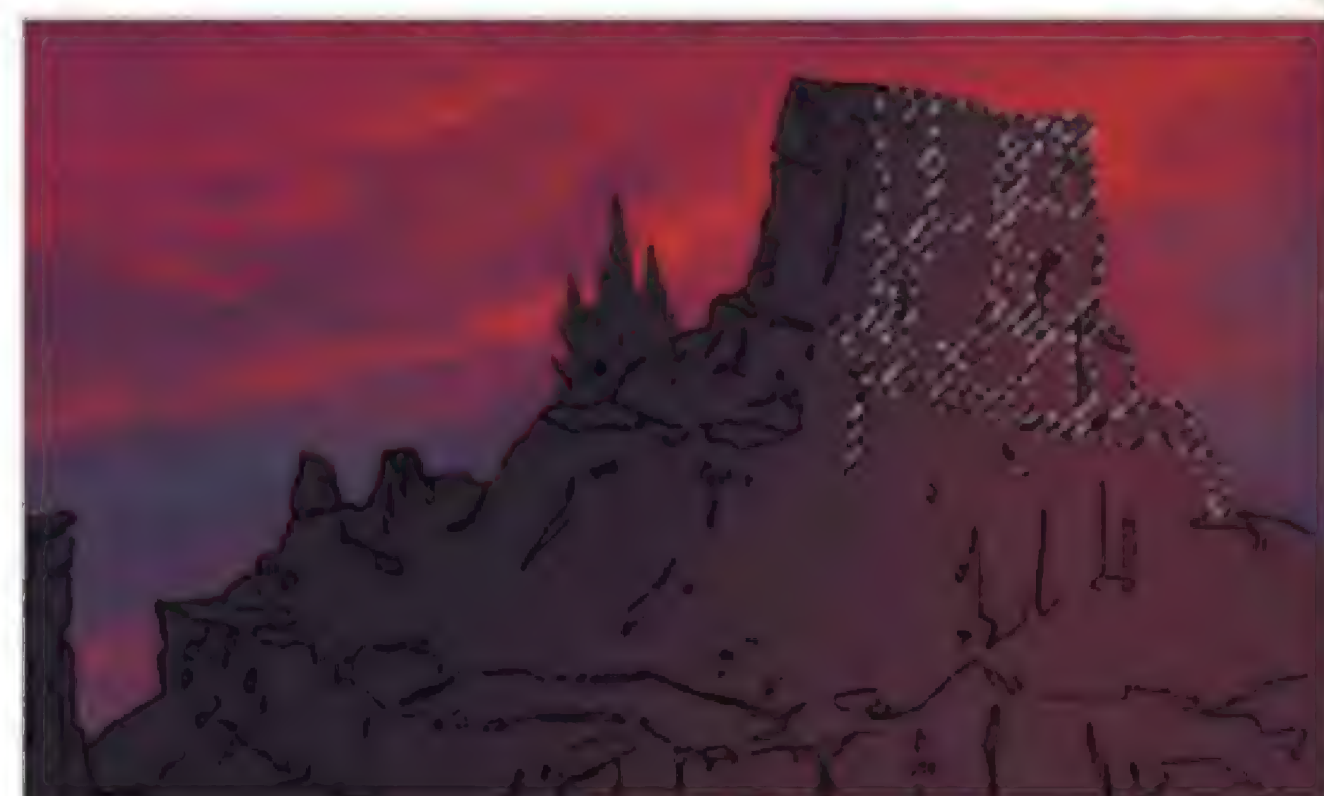
Use adjustment layers to test the brightness, contrast, hue and saturation variables within your image without affecting your actual paint. You can make adjustments to help make the character pop or to make the background recede.

### USE YOUR FLATS

The Flats layer is an invaluable tool for colouring and painting your work. Use it to your advantage to grab objects quickly, add or subtract selections and create large masking areas for any number of adjustments.



**06 Mountain forms** Select the far background mountains with the Magic Wand. Set your brush to 35% Flow and the Screen mode. Pick a large brush size that covers half the mountain width and lightly brush on a bright-red tone where the sun's light hits the peaks. Build these subtle light forms across the mountain range.



**07 Rocky details** Grab the Lasso and cut some very basic rock shapes over the mountains where the sunlight touches them. Brush bright red within these cuts to create shadows. Make smaller and more detailed cuts, building up forms closer to the foreground. Use the same method with a bright aquamarine tone for the secondary lighting.





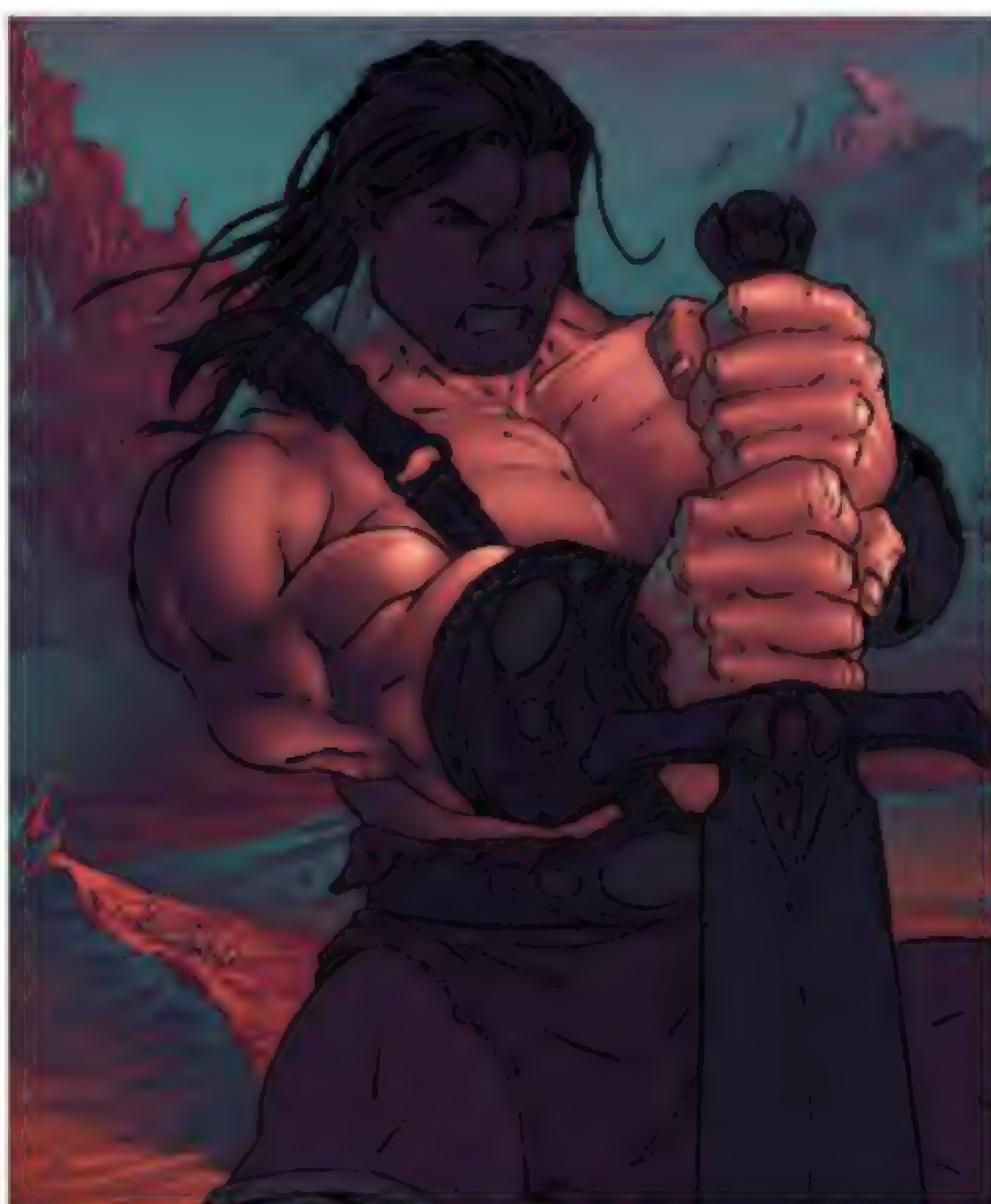
**08 Desert floor** Put a touch of yellow in your bright red tone and paint the ground using the same principals, building subtle forms with a large brush then cutting in the basic shapes with large selections and focusing on details with more intricate ones.



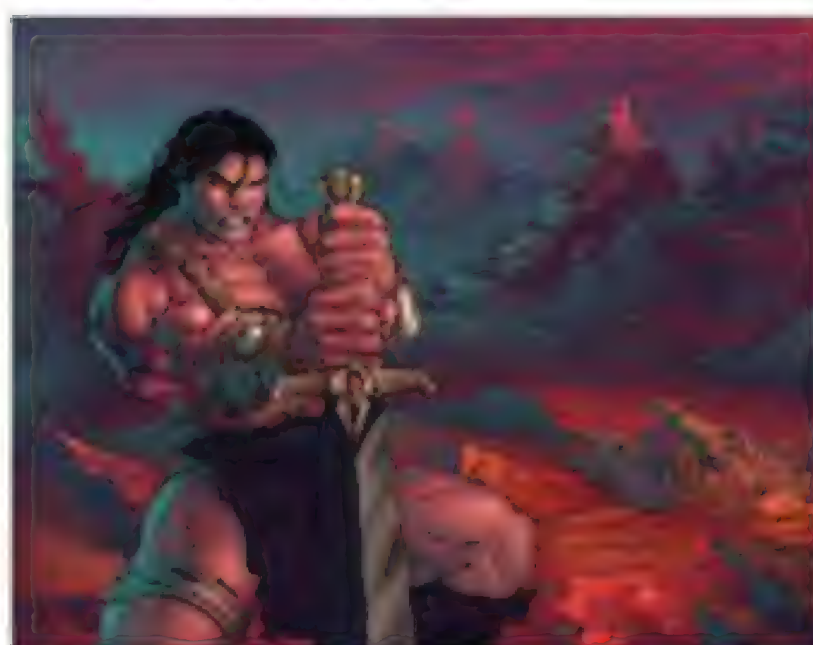
**09 Barbarian muscle** Our hero is really buff, so we need to render the muscle forms with higher contrast. To set off your highlights, keep the midtones a little darker. Let the muscles stay in shadow as they curve away from the light. Place the brightest and most saturated colours where you want to draw attention.

## MORE LAYERS PLEASE

You may separate your single-colour Flats layer by creating a new layer for each light source. In this case we would have a sunset layer and a blue-green layer. Set these to the Screen blend mode if you're painting with the brush set to Screen mode too.



**10 Skin details** With the Brush tool set to Screen mode and at 35% Flow, select the chest area and pick a peach tone from the Color Picker. Brush where the light would hit the object then create a cut over the light form and brush on more highlights. Follow the light source and cut in small, detailed highlights where you think it needs them.



**11 Metallic shine** Colour metal with higher contrast going to very bright highlights. Keep the brightest highlights tight to enhance the reflective surfaces and paint with warm tones, keeping with the limited palette. Render the barbarian's hair with a similar approach of smaller and tighter highlights to show more detail.



**12 Dark shadows** Set your brush to the Normal blend mode, pick a dark skin tone and cut in some shadows from the hair in front of his face and the hands on his chest. Brush in shadows under his sword strap, gauntlet trim, along his loincloth on his leg and a larger shadow cast from his sword.



**13 Painted lines** Lock transparency on the Line Art layer. Use the Lasso tool to select portions of the lines to colour. Fill or pencil the line art with colour tones slightly darker than the object it surrounds. Colour the lines lighter where the barbarian's skin is brightest to reduce the contrast of the line art in that area.



**14 Desert dust** Create a mask of the hero by carefully selecting the line art then Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift-click on the Line Art thumbnail. Add Magic Wand selections from the Flats layer until he is 100% selected then invert this. Create a new Screen layer and apply the mask. Now we can paint dust in the background without affecting our hero.



## 15 Final tweaks

Step back and look at your image, flipping the canvas if you like as viewing the piece from a new perspective helps identify areas that need work. Darken the background mountains a touch and blend out some of the corners with a large brush.





GILANG  
ANDRIAN

Artist info



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I am a student who is currently studying at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore. I love to draw and paint. My art is mainly influenced by Japanese and Korean artists.

# Create a manga-inspired skyship

**Gilang Andrian** shows you the process of painting a manga skyship from sketch to polished piece

Sky Guidance

*Photoshop*



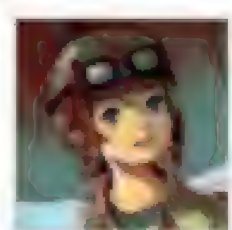


Skyships are a common feature in anime and they can be really fun to draw and paint. They're also a Miyazaki staple, making appearances in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, *Laputa Castle in the Sky* and *Howl's Moving Castle*. In anime, skyships are often inspired by submarines, old-fashioned aeroplanes and zeppelins. They can be combined with other aesthetics as well, such as cars, motorbikes or even organic shapes. Your design can be a battleship, a transport ship, a passenger ship or even a floating town! There are no boundaries or limitations, so let your imagination flow as you paint. They can look friendly, aggressive or intimidating by making them look clean and comfortable or old and rusty respectively.

The ship may also come with decorations such as graffiti or a balcony. Bear in mind that fantasy always needs a degree of realism, such as engines, wings or propellers so that the machine could feasibly exist in the sky. Above all, though, design your ship to be as unique as possible so that it will have a distinct visual appeal and stay in people's memories.

The skyship in this step-by-step guide is a huge, pirate airship. It serves as a home as well as for battle purposes. It has a body similar to a submarine and a tower on the top like an aircraft carrier. The skyship is called Big Eye due to the number of windows on the front part of the ship. It looks a bit rusty and is armed with cannons on both sides. A girl is guiding the ship out from the skyport using a small glider-like airship. You can create a great story by carefully considering the design of your vehicle and characters to incorporate enough details to let the reader's imagination soar.





# Sketch and colour

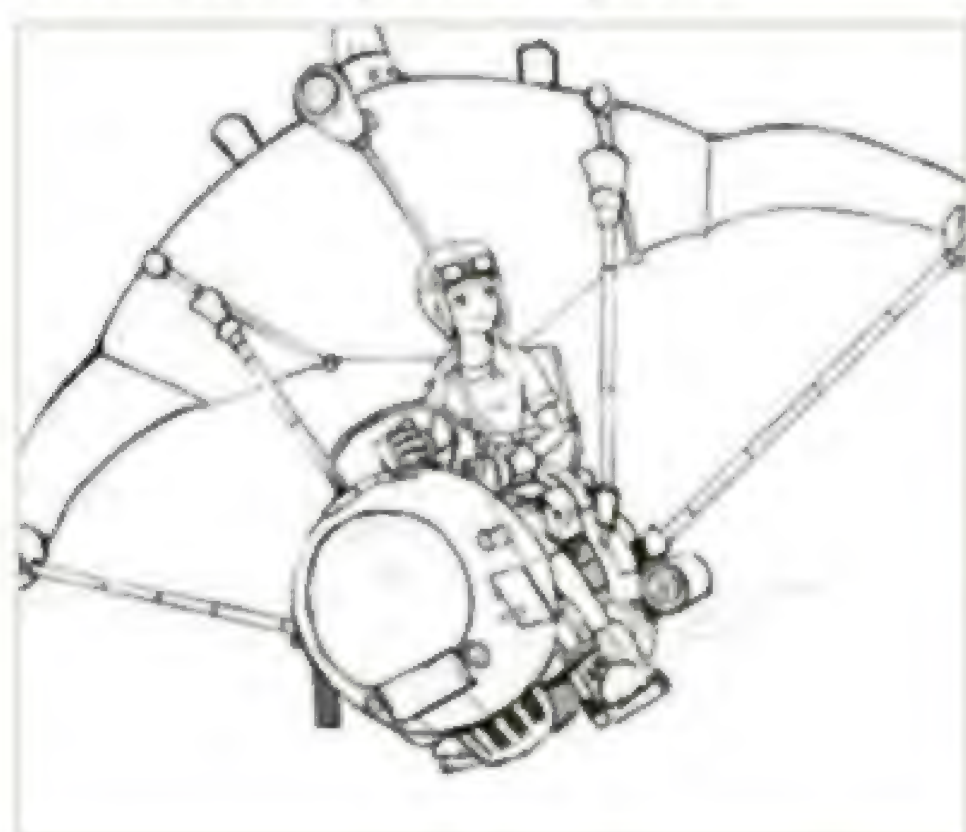
Refine the design and get your tones down

**01 Sketch it out** Start out by sketching ideas for your characters and vehicles, either working initially on paper or doing the entire thing digitally. You need to sketch out all the components that the final image will have; how the character will look, the airship and the environment.



**02 Rough composition** Draw a rough outline to represent the final composition. You may want to create more than one composition so you have a few options before deciding which you think is the best.

**03 Sketch cleanup** After you have decided on which composition you like, you can start to clean up the outline. It is up to your preference how clean or rough this outline is and will largely depend on how much time you have to spend.



**04 Different brushes** Using different types of brushes can be really beneficial to your works, for example to render soft details, to achieve visible brushstrokes or just the smaller details. For detailing, it's good to use a small Hard Round brush from Photoshop's presets.

**05 Colour palette** Change the outline layer to Multiply, create a new one and put it below the outline in the layer stack. You can start to apply the colour roughly to set the mood and how you want the image to look in the end. You may want to apply other colour schemes with different hues to try them out before making a final decision.



## USE THE EYEDROPPER

One of the most useful features of Photoshop when painting is the Eyedropper tool, so keep it handy. The shortcut is Opt/Alt when you are using a brush, or just the I key otherwise. You can easily pick, mix and blend the colour with this powerful tool and it means you can adapt existing tones in your image for detail.



**06 More detail** Once you are settled with the colour scheme, you can start to add in more things such as highlights and shadows. At this stage it is best to keep it quite rough still. You can do this on a separate layer or on the same one, depending on how you prefer to work.



**07 Adjust the hues** Adjust the colour according to your preference. This is made a lot easier with Photoshop's adjustment layers and you can create one if you want to quickly alter the colour balance or saturation. You can make as many adjustment layers as you want until you are happy.





**08 Refine the outline** After you're happy with the colour, start refining the glider. You can make a layer above the lines to lay down the colour carefully so that the outline look thinner and refined. Use the Eyedropper tool to switch colour quickly and overlap the outline using a small brush. You may want to keep the lines in some parts.

**09 Detail the glider** Add in more detail and colour to the glider, and continue to refine the outline. It's better to focus on one thing at a time, so make sure that you separate the layers of each object for easier editing later on in the process.



**10 Move onto the ship** After you are done with the glider, move onto the airship. Render it the same way as the glider, but make sure that the colour is not too strong, because the airship is more distant from the viewer. As a rule, the more distant the object, the softer the colour will be.



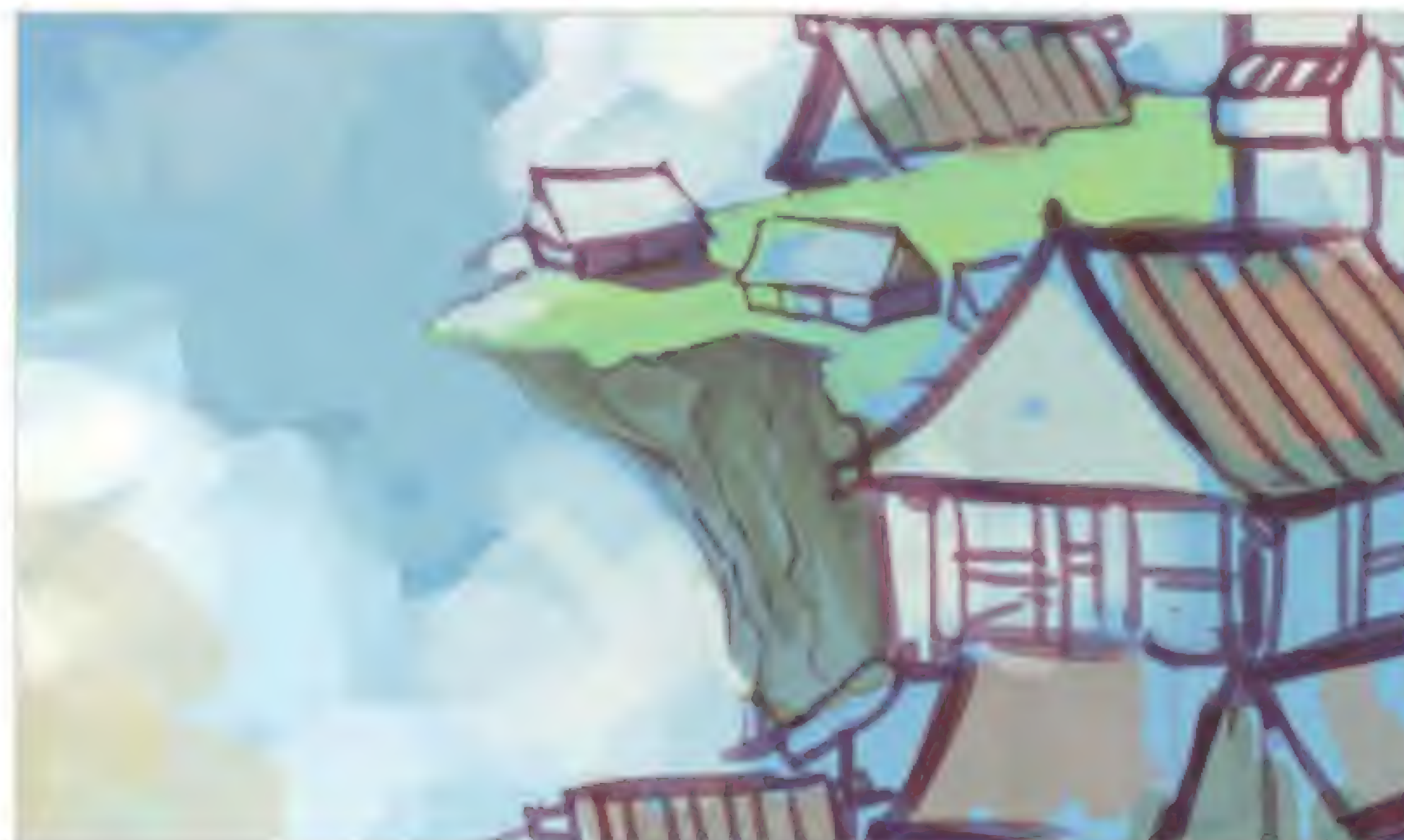
**11 Unique elements** Create some unique elements for the airship to make it more interesting, like the lines of washing. This represents the pirates' rough lifestyle and gives the viewer a sense of character. We can add other details to make the ship more interesting such as wet paint.



**12 Continue with the ship** Detailing is a tedious job which requires a lot of patience. Continue to refine the airship in terms of its elements, and also add more shadows and highlights so that they can help to give the ship depth and weight in its sky setting.

## DO NOT OVERWORK

Take a break every one or two hours while making a digital painting: it's not a good idea to work on a piece all day without stopping. Go take a walk, rest or have a snack so you can spend some time away from the screen and your image. When you come back, you may see mistakes in your painting you didn't before – it's like refreshing your senses.



## 13 Paint a cliff

After you are done with the airship for the time being, move onto the environment that's below it. Render the cliff to make it more natural. It is important to render the shape of the cliff by adding highlights and shadows. Make the flow of your strokes random, too, so it looks natural.



# Tutorial

Create a manga-inspired skyship



**14 Port environment** The cliff below is the port for our airship, and it is never too late to add in more elements, such as the detail on the houses, to make the port look bigger.

## KEEP PRACTISING

Painting is a process and no one can finish a beautiful image perfectly on their first try. Practice makes perfect so don't be disappointed at the outcome of any early attempts. Instead, try your best to improve next time. If you work hard enough and you love what you are doing, you will get better as you go along.



**16 Render clouds** Make a new layer to render the clouds using your soft brushes and the same method as the sky. You may want to use a reference when you paint the clouds to better understand how they look and work with light in the real world to improve your image.



**18 Cloud highlights** You may want to draw a soft, thin highlight to help identify the shape of the cloud. You can use hard brushes on some parts, so the cloud won't look too blurry.

**15 Paint the sky** When you are happy with the details of the port, move onto other parts of your painting. The sky is a bit too rough, so create a new layer and use soft brushes to render it so it looks soft and painterly but still easily recognisable. Add more tones too, so it won't feel empty.

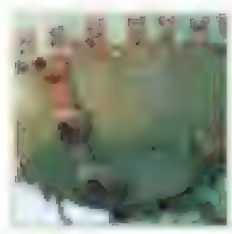


**17 Direct the viewer** Lines and flow can help direct the viewer's attention to the focal point of your image. The clouds can help us to draw this line and lead towards our main character in the glider. Create some wispy shapes that lead from the airship to our guide on her vehicle.

# BIG EYE

**19 Design an emblem** We can add an emblem to the side of the airship to make the design slightly more interesting. Open a new file and make a simple logo by using the Shape and Type tools. Make the background transparent and save it as a PNG. You may consider using other programs such as Adobe Illustrator for this.





## Add final details

Give your ship a logo and enhance with effects



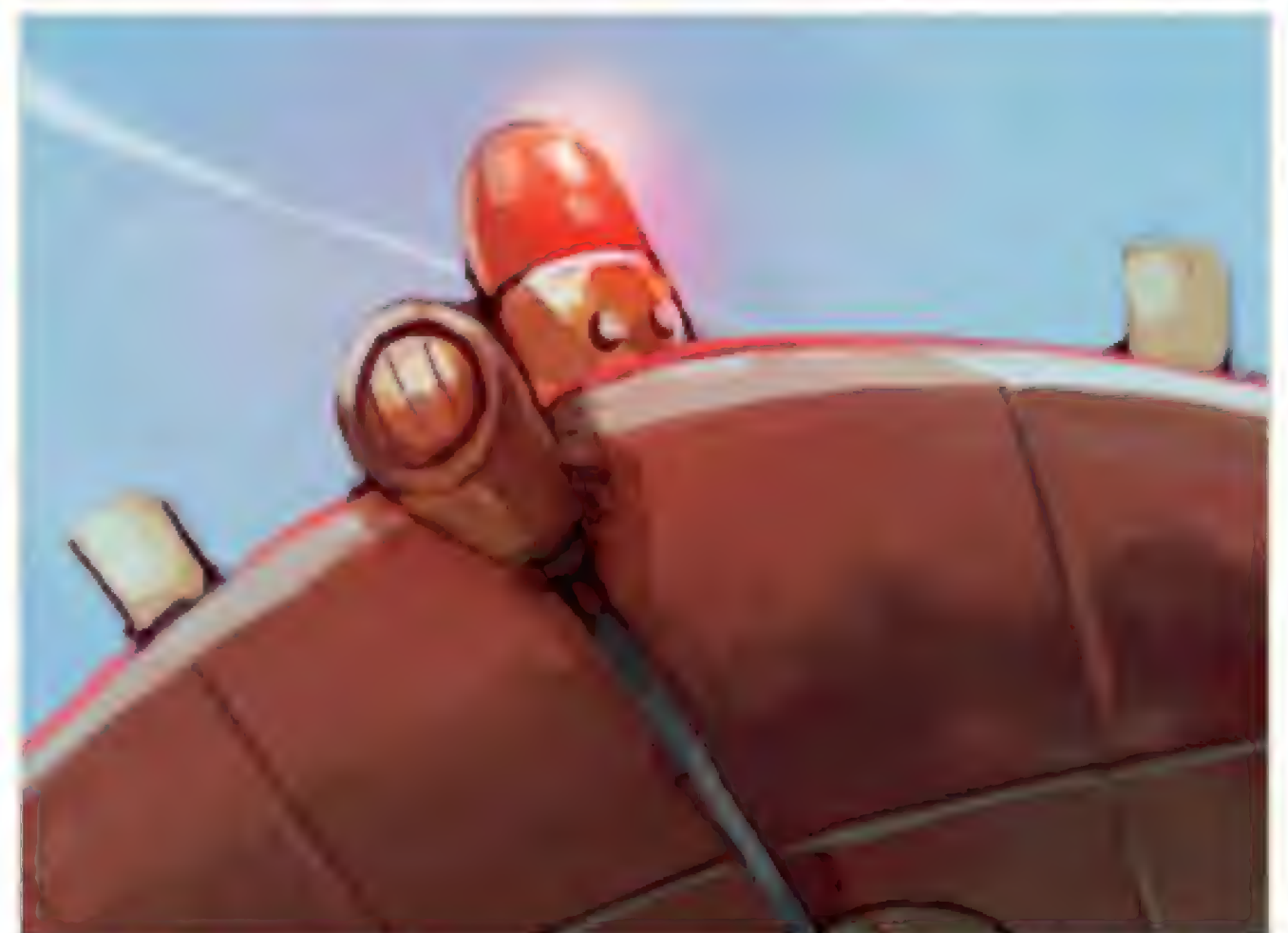
**20 Apply the emblem** With it saved as a transparent PNG file, import the logo into the previous file. Use the Warp tool under the Transform commands and then distort the emblem according to the contours of the side of the airship.

**21 Paint over it** After you apply it, you may want to paint over or edit the logo to make it more believable as being part of the ship. Also, to give it a 3D feel, you can apply the Black & White adjustment layer boosting shadows and highlights.



**22 Birds** Adding some birds will make the scene livelier and enhance the sense of scale. Create a new layer, paint the birds and apply shadows and highlights as appropriate. Use references to paint the birds so they look realistic. Of course, if you want, you can create fantasy birds!

**23 Colour blend** You can quickly change the hues in your piece using the Color blend mode. Create a new layer and change the blending mode in the Layers palette to Color. Pick the hue that you want and apply it with a soft brush.



**24 Glowing effects** We need to make the red light on the top of the glider glow. To do this, simply create a new layer and change the mode to Overlay. Pick a red colour, use a soft brush and paint it slowly.



**25 Finish up** Take a break, come back later and check if there are any possible improvements in proportion, colour or detailing that you could make. If there are changes you want to make, create a new layer and you can add more elements from there.



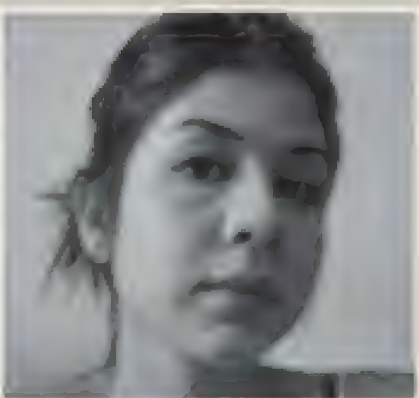
# Tutorial

Norse character design



## LILI IBRAHIM

Artist info



[www.lilibrahim.com](http://www.lilibrahim.com)

Lili Ibrahim is a freelance concept artist and illustrator working from and living in her London apartment. She is a film and games enthusiast with a degree in illustration and animation, hoping to bring something exciting to the industry.



# Norse character design

**Lili Ibrahim** takes you step by step through how to paint an army going to war and the Norse goddess watching over them

Freyja

Photoshop

**R**ich and fascinating, Norse mythology flourished in Scandinavia prior to Christianity during the Middle Ages, specifically the Viking Age, dating from the 8th to the 11th Century.

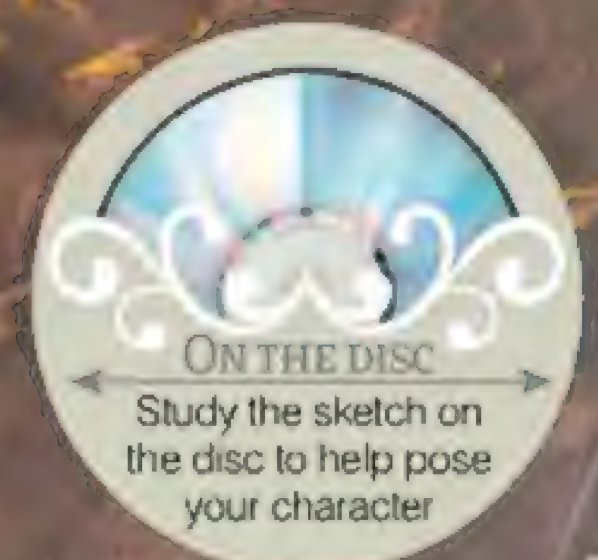
Norse mythology has a lot of iconic gods and goddesses who are well known thanks to modern interpretations of the characters. There has been a particular resurgence of interest recently with the release of films like *Thor* and *The Avengers*.

One of the better-known goddesses from these stories, Freyja, is the goddess of love, beauty, fertility, war and death, and rules over the Fólkvangr, the meadow where half of all soldiers slain in battle go after death. The other half are sent to Valhalla, where the god Odin reigns.

Freyja is often depicted wearing a cloak of falcon feathers with her necklace Brisingamen hanging around her neck. Freyja is also often seen next to her boar Hildisvíni (literally translated to battle swine) and the two cats who pull her chariot.

The illustration in this step-by-step tutorial depicts Freyja with most of her iconic items. Her design is also influenced by valkyries – the mythological creatures often associated with her. Valkyries are female battlefield psychopomps, and sometimes Freyja is depicted as a valkyrie herself.

The scene in the illustration is a war scene, where an army moves across a landscape with Freyja watching over them, waiting to collect their souls to take them back with her to Fólkvangr.







# Painting Freyja

Prepare your canvas for the goddess of beauty and war

**01 Sketch** It helps to sketch out your ideas on paper before taking it into Photoshop. Keep this stage loose and, when you have found the idea and composition you want to, bring it into the program. Set your sketch to Multiply and roughly throw down some greys on a layer beneath to get an idea of space.



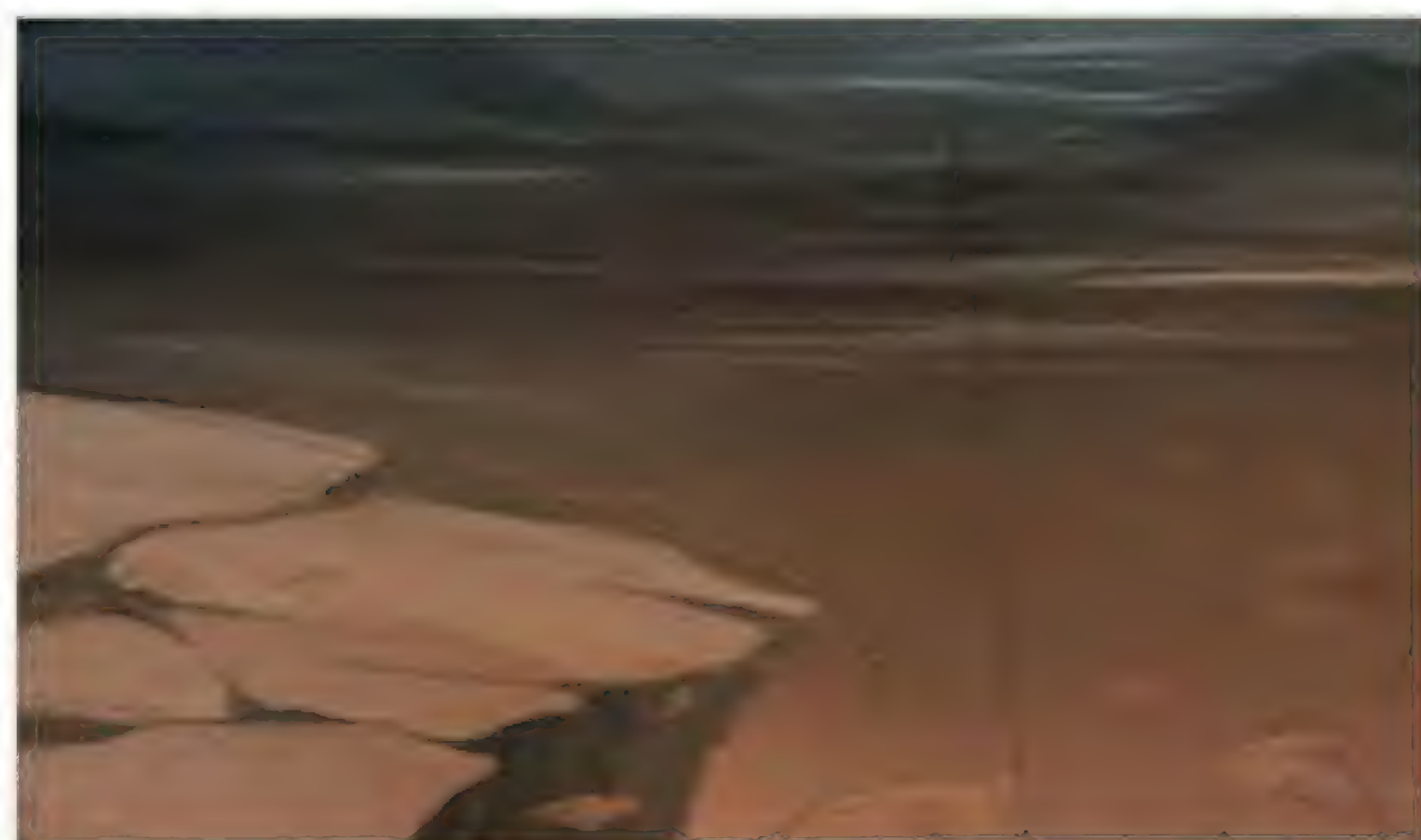
**02 Block out the background** In a background-heavy piece like this, I recommend getting this part done before the character. Start blocking it out by playing around with dark and light values.

### 03 Character silhouette

With a neutral grey and using the Lasso and Paint Bucket tools, fill in the shape of your character on a new layer under the sketch. On a layer set to Color, you can introduce some more distinct tones to the background. These colours will help you convey atmosphere for your piece. At this stage, try to keep to a limited colour palette for simplicity.



**04 Paint the sky** Switch off the silhouette of the character and start painting the sky. By keeping the sketch of the character still visible, you can plan out the details in your clouds and lighting to make sure they don't clash with the shape of the character. The sky immediately surrounding the character's face and upper body has been left a bit less detailed than the rest.



**05 Paint the ground** When you are starting to feel good about the sky, move down to the ground. The colours of the hills are fading into the colour of the sky the further back into the picture they are to show perspective. The closer ground is kept bright red and the contrast here is stronger as well.

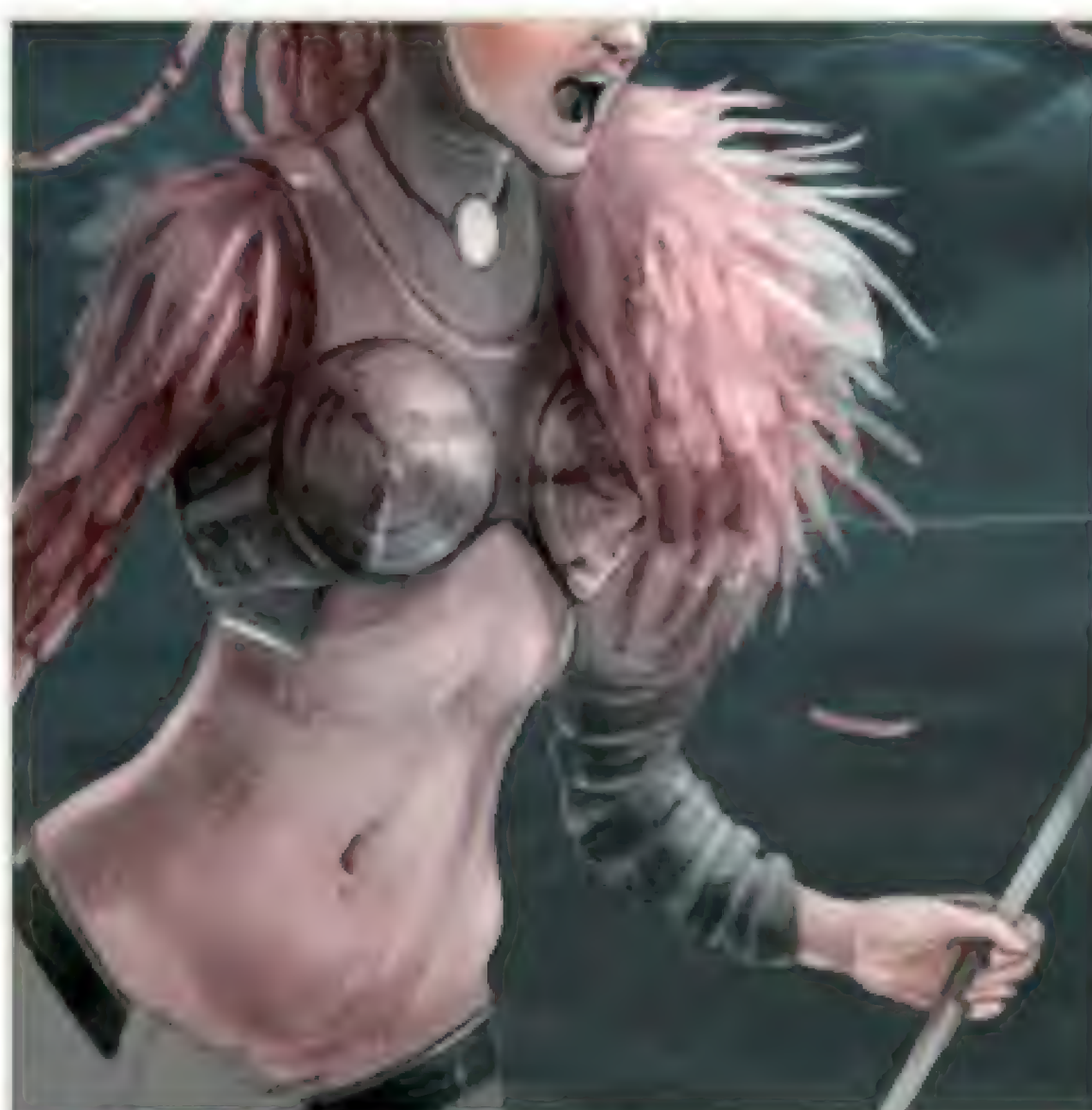
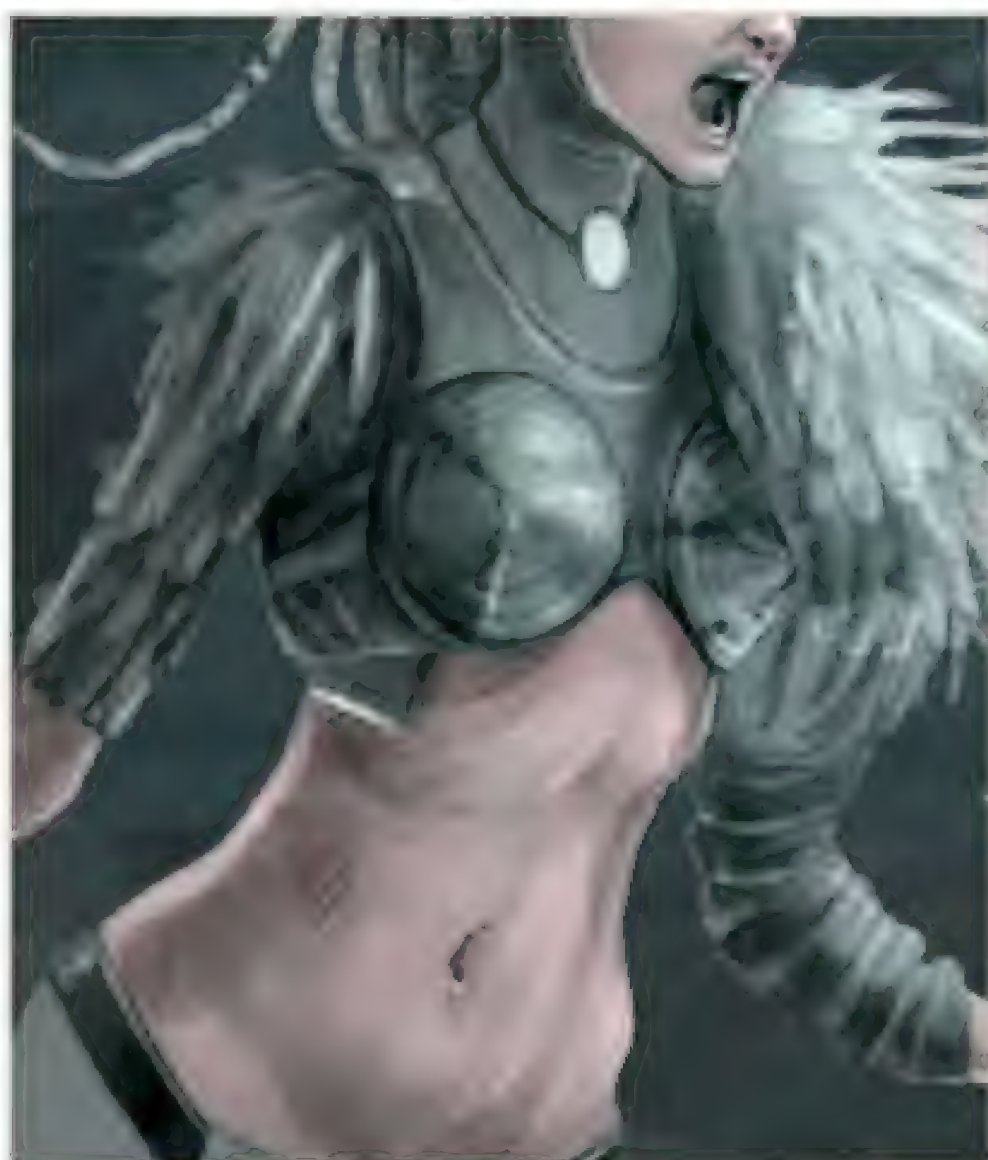


### 06 Character values

Switch on the character silhouette again and, on a new layer set to the Overlay mode, start adding values to it. By darkening and brightening areas, you can start chiselling out the character. Remember that different surfaces will react differently to light. Metal will have very sharp highlights and shadows, while hair and feathers will have a softer transition. The feathers will filter through light, too, and give a fuzzier impression.



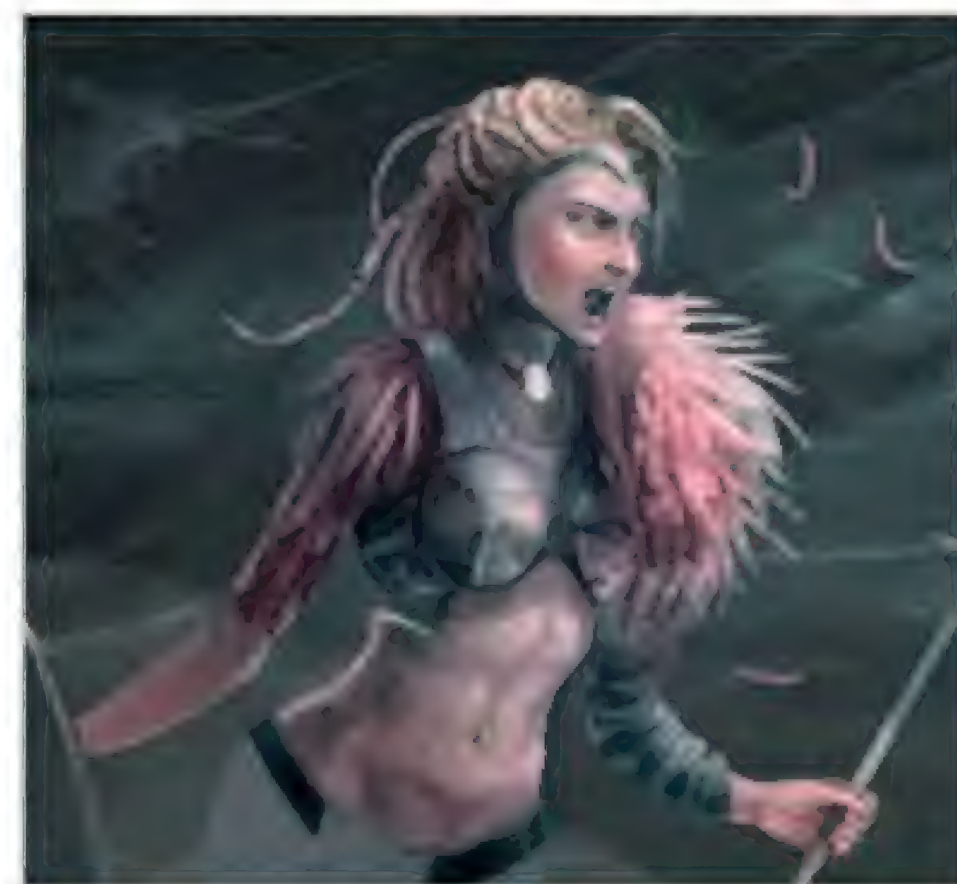
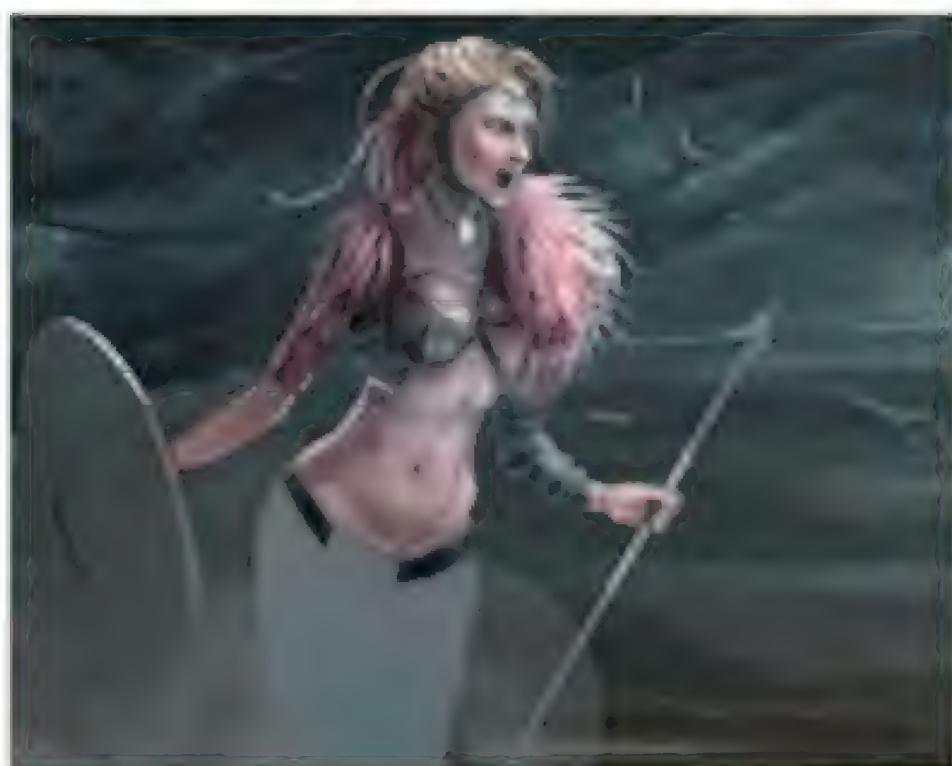
- 07 Colour the skin** On a new layer set to Overlay you can introduce skin tones. The skin tone can then be adjusted by tweaking the colour balance (Cmd/Ctrl+B) or the hue (Cmd/Ctrl+U).



## RESEARCH YOUR WEAK POINTS

Your visual memory can act like a library to store information about what things look like. Depending on what you have seen and done in your life, your visual memory will contain different information that you can call upon in your art. Nobody's visual library contains information about every single thing that exists, though, and when you have to illustrate something you might not know much about, research is vital!

- 08 More colours** Colours can also be added by painting onto a layer set to Color. Play around with the different layer types to find what works best for you. Don't worry about being too careful when painting the initial colours. Use a fuzzy brush and make the colours bleed into the surrounding areas. Also add a little bit of red blush to the skin. This is especially effective when added to legs, arms and faces.

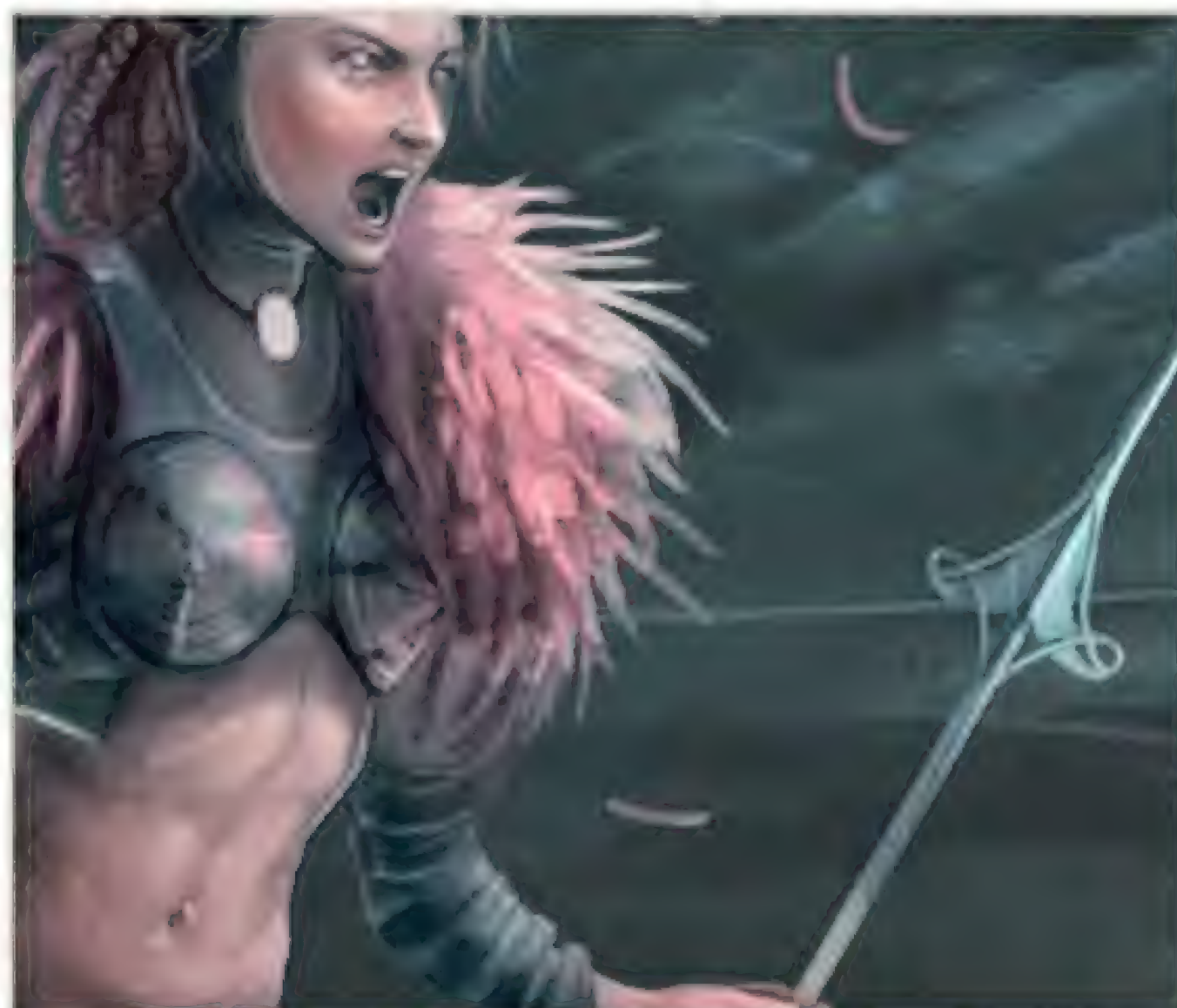


- 09 Colour correction** If the colours look strange against the background, the colour balance might be wrong. Merge the character layers and open the Color Balance dialog (Cmd/Ctrl+B). This adjustment helped to pull the shadows in a colder (bluer) direction to even things out.

- 10 Anatomy fix** When something looks wrong, fix it. The character's torso was a little off at this stage, and if you can't put your finger on exactly what it is that isn't working it's time for a research session. A bit of Liquify magic and some more muscle definition improved our goddess.

- 11 Contrast and colour** You can use the Color Balance adjustment at any point to further tweak the colours into a bluer tone. You can also add more shading to a layer set to the Multiply mode.

- 12 Keep painting** Paint details by picking colours that are already present on your canvas with the Eyedropper tool (using the keyboard shortcut I and clicking). At this stage you should avoid introducing completely new hues unless you actually want to recolor something or add emphasis to a specific item. Paint tiny braids in her hair this way with highlights and shadow, and design a spear with a decorative feel to give the impression of a powerful and important character.



- 13 Cut the skirt** If you haven't 100% decided on your character's costume at the sketching stage, don't be afraid to adapt it. The skirt in this design was made shorter, which revealed that the legs were slightly disproportionate. Sometimes last-minute changes can be advantageous!





### SURPRISE YOURSELF

The best places to find instant inspiration can be the least expected. Take some time browsing the internet and you will end up finding visual material you never would have thought about specifically searching for. All these things can and will influence your work, and the more diverse your influences are, the more dynamic your art will be.



**14 Feather detail** Detail the feathers on the character's shoulder, using reference images to get the look right. When working with small details like these, it is important not to forget to continually zoom out to get a good view of what you are actually doing.

**15 Shield design** When designing an emblem, it helps to do so in a separate document and then transfer it into your image – especially if the plan is to distort the perspective of the emblem. You can easily distort images with the different transformation options available. In this case the perspective transformation tool (Edit>Transform>Perspective) was used.



**16 Adaptation** When building up detail or making any changes, you can use the colours that are already available to you in the basic illustration. Colour pick with your Eyedropper and repaint!

**17 Start on the army** Beneath the cliff, start sketching out the basic shape of a vast army gathering on the field. At this stage, focus on getting a grasp of perspective and mass.

**18 Refine the crowd** Slowly build up the detail of the army. However, don't let the crowd grab too much attention away from the focal character, just give them enough detail so that the viewer can tell what it is they are looking at. Elements such as spears and flags help to visually communicate a vast, battle-ready army.

**19 Smoke and fire** Beacons were added on top of the distant mountains to give a grander scale to the narrative, and torches placed in the hands of some warriors to give the piece more life. On top of this, you can add a layer of soft smoke around the army from their flames to push them back into the painting a little. This could also give the impression of dust kicked up as the army marches forward.



**20 Final tweaks** If you think it would benefit the composition, enlarge the character to make her stand out more. Tweak the colours and contrast again and add a texture on top of the final image for a bit of grain. Lighten the piece and it's ready!



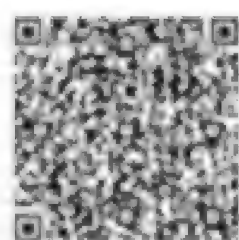
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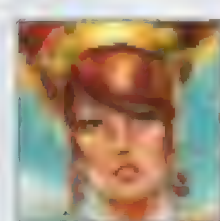


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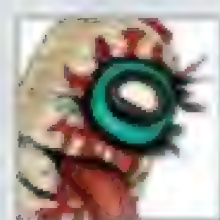
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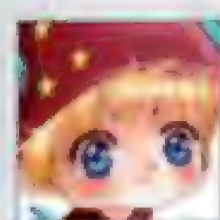
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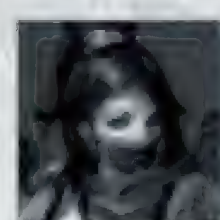
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# How to draw a pin-up goddess

RB White gives you a crash course on how to design a pin-up girl from ancient times

**Drawing and painting pin-ups is a firm favourite for artists.** In art the pin-up can be found in history paintings of classical and mythical themes, and you can see that the Old Masters were having fun.

At the same time this is a very challenging theme since anatomy needs to be considered. The modern pin-up approach is slightly different due to changes in fashion in the 20th Century. Anatomy is slightly exaggerated so girls are more athletic looking. The artist needs to be careful, though, because exaggerating body proportions too much will make your pin-up become less attractive. Slightly longer legs and neck (to remind us of fashion models), stronger curves (to look like

beautiful actresses from the Fifties) and strong make-up is the formula. Adding one more character with a completely different appearance can also give us a strong contrast between beauty and the beast.

The monster is calm, chained but not wild, and we can see who the master is here. They are visually connected with the yellow tones present in both. To create the illusion that they live a few floors above us, metaphorically speaking, and suggest that she is god-like, add the top of a mountain below her eye level and some planets that are visible from her balcony. There is no dramatic contrast in values in this image, so the whole atmosphere is filled with a certain serenity and peace.

## Traditional and digital Set the composition first then have fun painting

**01 Rough pencil drawing** Start with a pencil drawing. Set the composition with a loose sketch and, when you're happy, tighten your drawing. This ensures that you won't have to make big changes once it comes to painting. This makes meeting deadlines easier, and this is the most important thing when working for a client.



**02 Flat colours** With flat colours on separate layers you can make initial decisions about the mood. This sexy goddess lives where the sun shines eternally, the sky is blue and clouds are fluffy. Use bright colours on separate layers so adjusting each element is simple and fast. Add a little bit of your basic tones to the layers and start thinking about depth.

**03 Define form and detail** With a soft airbrush, start working on the forms. Shadows and highlights should be soft so set the Hardness of your brush to 0%. Start with bigger forms and move towards small ones. Adding details at this stage helps visualise how the final image will look. Creating texture and painting around it can also speed up the whole process.







The contrast between the goddess's stylised form and the more realistic ugliness of her pet creature makes her stand out even more.

**RB  
WHITE**

Artist info



[www.rbwhiteart.blogspot.com](http://www.rbwhiteart.blogspot.com)

RB is a freelance artist who has worked for many years for publishing and animation companies. His clients range from small local publishers to major studios including Universal Studios, Hasbro, Nickelodeon, Scholastic, Yowza! Animation and many more besides.



# Creating alien archetypes

Tips for creating and exploring the classic alien races of science fiction

In this tutorial five basic alien archetypes will be presented. All of these were created using the same process. First of all the main concept was drawn up with pencil and paper. Then the drawings were scanned into the computer and opened up in the desired art program. In the case of the example images here, ArtRage Studio 3.5.4 was used.

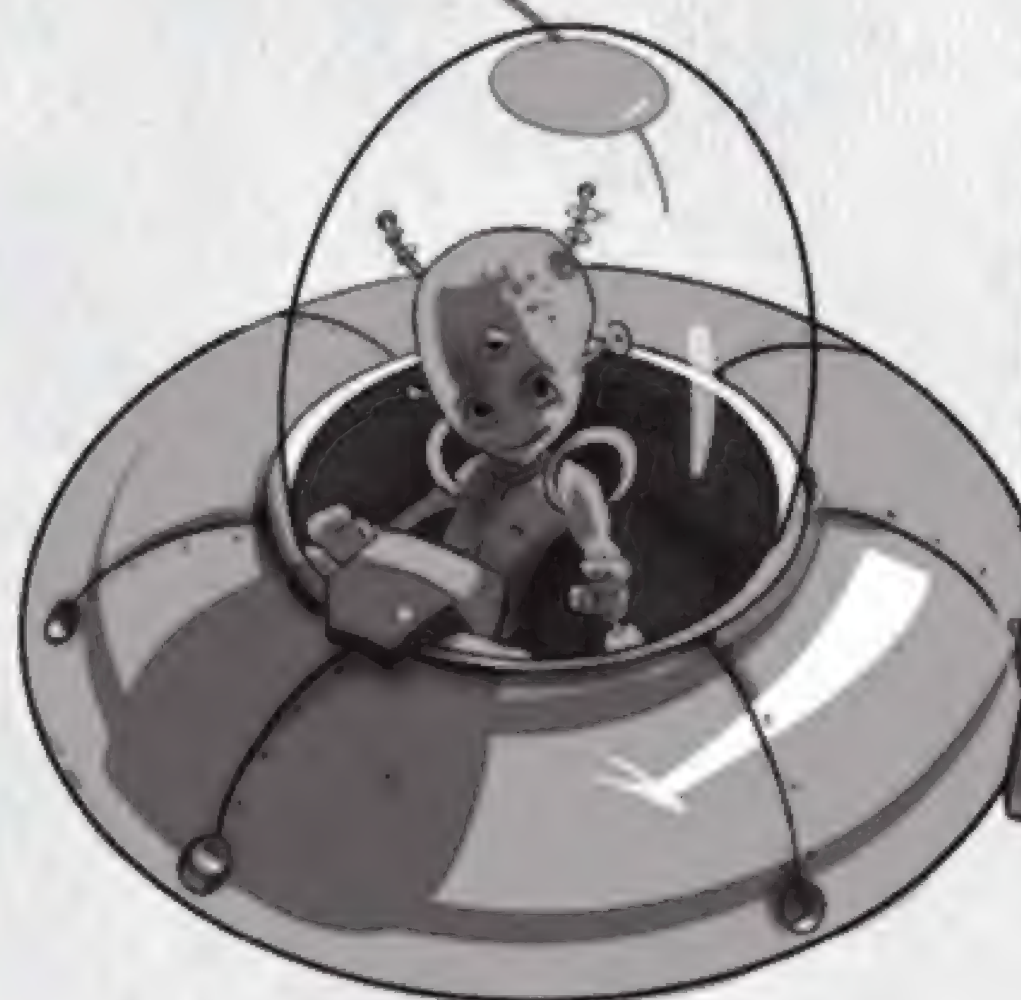
The drawings were then digitally inked with the Pen tool. After the line art was complete, a light value was applied to the figure. Over that, a darker value was applied for the shadows. Finally, with the Airbrush tool, gradients were placed to add depth and highlights. Having a systematic process for bringing your ideas to life enables you to focus more on the concept and less on the execution.

The concepts in this article are based on classic science fiction. The sci-fi alien can embody what we hope is possible for ourselves as humans and all that is good, or they can embody all that we fear and consider evil. Commonly, alien beings are seen as superior to us in intellect so they are often depicted with an enlarged brain or head. Looking at these classic examples of aliens helps to inspire new creations. While aliens of the past presented us with fears of the nuclear age, government unrest and xenophobia, aliens yet to come will have new issues to present. Of course there is nothing wrong with just wanting to exercise the imagination and make something that looks wildly awesome too.

“ Having a systematic process for bringing ideas to life enables you to focus more on the concept and less on the execution ”

## THE GREY

The grey is shorter than a human with a small pot-bellied body, large solid black eyes, no visible gender, no real nose apart from two wide, angled nostrils and a small, expressionless mouth. Common in today's mythology, this alien is seen as a mysterious unknown. You can create a menacing look by casting its emotionless face in shadow. Note that the foot to the rear lands higher up than the front foot. This is an effective way to place the alien on a three-dimensional plane.



## LITTLE GREEN MEN

Smaller than the grey and with antennae, little green men are camp characters and often come across as rather chirpy and friendly. By placing the character in a stereotypical spacecraft you are able to give this alien a retro feel. Instead of using lines to texture the skin, use values so that his innocent nature still shines through. Also, notice how contour lines are used to add volume to the craft, grounding the character in believable three-dimensional space.





# Fantasy Art Skills

**EDWARD  
'JOEL' WITTLIF**

Artist info



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I am a self-taught digital artist living in Colorado. I have a strong background and formal training in traditional art. My interests vary from impressionistic plein air painting and comic art to conceptual speed painting.



## THE ENERGY BEING

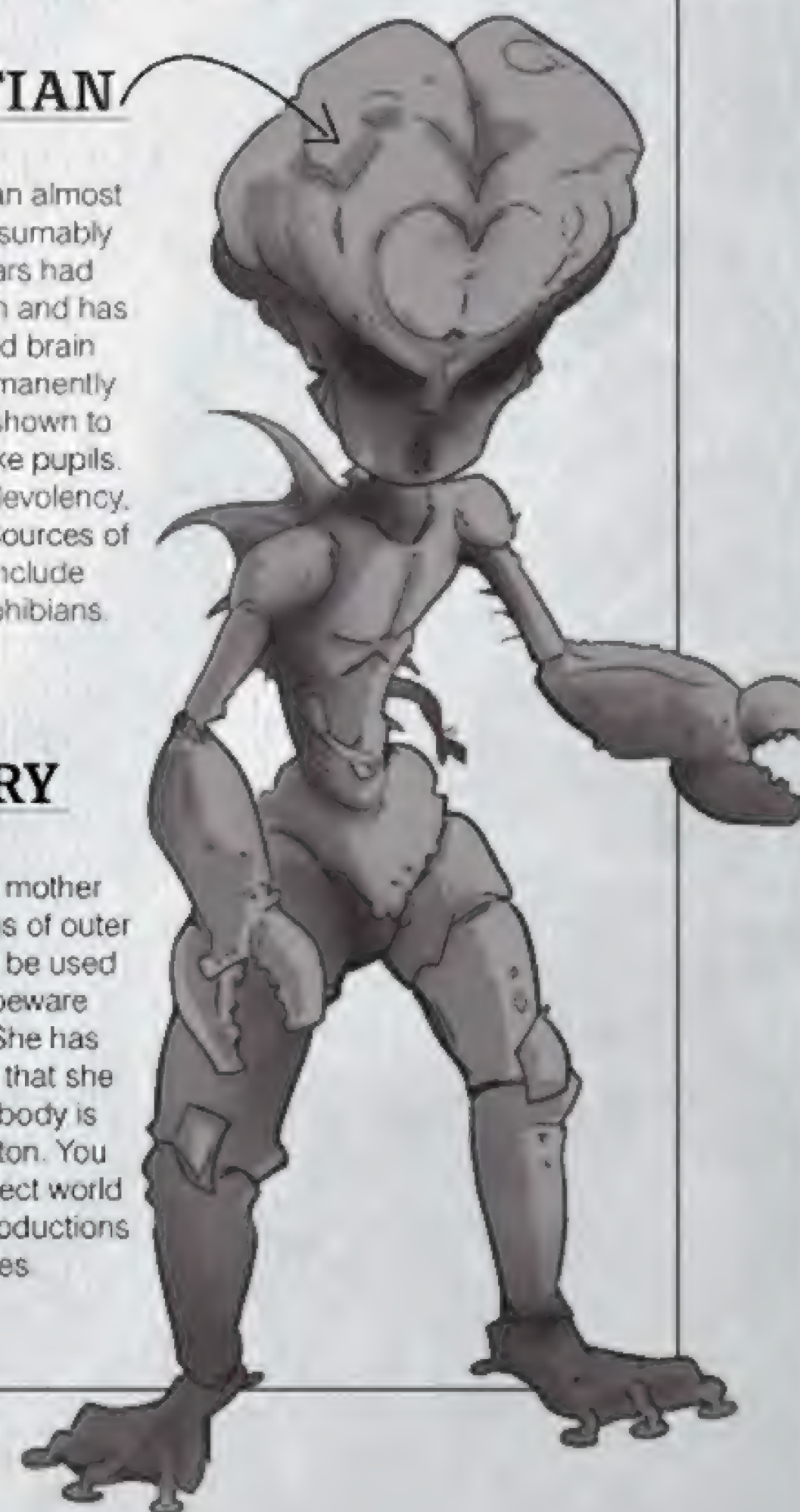
Formed entirely of energy, these beings can manifest themselves in humanoid form. They are semi-translucent glowing creatures often given the properties of higher intelligence and enlightenment, but they can also be mischievous. Inspiration for drawing these aliens can be found by studying fire and photographic negatives. Notice how creating areas of silhouetted darkness gives the feeling of light. When drawing these aliens, think of filling the thickest parts of the creature in with the darkest values.

## CLASSIC MARTIAN MONSTER

A Fifties classic, the Martian is an almost aquatic-looking humanoid, presumably based on the old idea that Mars had canals. He is taller than a human and has a large head with an expanded brain cavity that makes him look permanently angry. Commonly this alien is shown to have a vascular head and cat-like pupils. To give him an extra dose of malevolency, black out the eyes completely. Sources of inspiration for this alien can include shellfish, crustaceans and amphibians.

## THE PREDATORY QUEEN

This monstrosity is a parasitic hive mother able to survive in the harsh conditions of outer space. She seeks out prey that can be used as hosts for her alien spawn but beware because she never travels alone. She has large jaws and long, claw-like arms that she uses to pin down her victims. Her body is covered in an armour-like exoskeleton. You can find inspiration for this in the insect world as well as many of the Hollywood productions based around this alien species.





# Be inspired by Asian-style demons

Explore the myriad mystery of Japan's legendary creatures along with Painter's various inking brushes

There is a world where haunted teapots caper, sinister tricksters lurk with narrowed eyes over toothy grins and disembodied limbs wait to ensnare the unwary. Japanese myth and legend is rife with such bizarre creatures and the list is fertile ground for the modern fantasy artist. Each creature has a story behind it; stories that are often as eerie as they are inspiring. There are many creatures, not just from Japan, but also from cultures around the world and throughout history that have fallen into obscurity. These creatures lend a fresh spark of originality to art that viewers appreciate and remember.

Most people are at least aware of the tengu or kitsune, which can be found in videogames such as *Okami* or *Blood Will Tell*, and can even be role played as one of the characters in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Not as many people know of the water-loving kappa or the chochinobake, one of the many tsukumogami or objects that, after a certain number of years, have become self-aware.

Along with exciting new beasts to play with, the imagination is fed by the distinctive style of Japanese artwork. Thick and thin brushes wiggle over the paper with expressive strokes to emulate this style on the digital canvas. Anatomy is exaggerated or forgone to enhance the dynamic energy of the artwork. For these images we used Corel Painter, and this program offers countless ways to ink. The real-media effects will spatter and smear in unpredictable ways that make the creative process all the more exciting. Experiment with the brushes mentioned here but don't be frightened to try others. And don't worry. These brushes will not become sentient and haunt you.

## AMBER HILL

Artist info



vantid.deviantart.com

Amber specialises in wildlife and fantasy art, and revels in the elegance and beauty of the natural world. She draws upon the wealth of inspiration that travel offers and resides by the mountains in beautiful Boulder, Colorado.



## THE MONSTER CAT

This old tom has lived so long his tail has begun to split. Now he can shape shift into human form, create zombies by leaping over corpses and knock everything off the shelf by flying. Known as the bakeneko, he has become a demon cat. Choose the Soft Bristle Watercolor tool and paint lots of finely hatched lines to portray fur, but focus on the sinuous curves that grace the feline form. Hold down the Shift key for perfect horizontal and vertical lines for the lantern – he doesn't need one as he glows in the dark, but he likes to drink the lamp oil. Block in the cream, green, purple and red under the inks, and use a Multiply layer for the shadows again.

## THE RIVER CHILD

Kappa are beaked water sprites known for both innocent pranks and malicious drownings. They can live away from their stream thanks to the indentation atop the head that holds water. This fellow is so excited by his frog-legs dinner he's sloshing it everywhere! Ink him using the Coarse Bristle Sumi-e brush. Think about every stroke before committing, like real sumi-e. Use stylus pressure to achieve heavy, angular strokes or delicate lines. Next use the Scratchboard Rake tool to paint blue-green and dull cream beneath. Blue water serves as a simple accent. Create a new layer and set it to Multiply. Use cream to paint shadows.



## THE RAVEN DEMON

Tengus have a reputation for being evil as well as dangerous protectors. They are often seen in the garb of the itinerant priest or yamabushi. Ink this guy with the Detail Airbrush and Scratchboard Rake tools. Use the airbrush for the long, fine lines of his hair or hackles and facial bristles. Use nature to your advantage with creature design. Crows have thick scales on their legs that blend seamlessly into armoured boots for the tengu. The dark shading behind the outstretched hand pushes the claws forward.



## THE LANTERN SPOOK

When in Japan, don't let objects sit around for over a hundred years or they might become possessed. The chochinobake is a spirit that haunts a paper lantern. Ink this ghoulish creature with finer lines than the other monsters. Block in the flats and shadows as before and use the shadows in the creases of the paper to give depth to his head. That juicy eye is inspired by the artwork of the videogame *Okami* and is painted with the Soft Airbrush tool, as is the tongue. The blood is actually paint that has run and the eyeball hairs are merely shredded paper.



## NINE-TAILED FOX

This villainous kitsune-tsuke is very old and powerful, as evinced by her nine long tails. She is inked over a sketch with the Scratchboard Rake tool on a new layer set to Multiply. Hundreds of little lines simulate the look of stylised fur seen in old Japanese artwork. Create a new layer beneath the ink and paint with dull cream for the shadow layer. Duplicate the layer, lock its transparency and Flood Fill with a lighter cream. Set it to Overlay and use the Eraser tool to carve out shadows on the body and tails. Create a new layer and paint those fun red markings.



# Create a frozen effect

Learn how to create the feeling of ice and a chilling atmosphere within your artwork using colour, light and textures

**Painting ice is a skill you can use to depict not only the material feel of ice, but also a wide range of emotions and situations.**

Especially in fantasy art, icy creatures and environments are commonplace, from ice queens to mythological northern locations.

When painting icy scenes, make sure you set up a basic colour palette at the beginning. This determines how chilly your picture is going to feel. Naturally the palette is made up of cool colours, but sometimes it can be mixed with warmer tones like yellows and greens to make the whole thing look more vibrant.

The tools for depicting ice are relatively simple. You can start with a basic Hard Round brush to block in the basic light and

forms. On top of this, start laying in some textures to get the feeling of different surfaces from rough to smooth, maybe a thin layer of snow for some parts and so on. You could then finish things off by adding small cracks and maybe some glow with a soft brush to give another dimension of detail.

You can learn how to depict a wide range of icy effects and emotions by looking at the real thing. Find photos of ice and environments that have the right feeling you're looking for. Paint studies and pay close attention to the colours, how light is reflecting from different surfaces and how to imply different textures. You'll get a lot more variation to your icy creations that way!

## Painting frozen fantasy

Learn to create ice and a feeling of frozenness



**01 Start with line art** Start with some basic line art to set the composition and define the forms you'll paint later. This stage isn't mandatory, but helps you separate the problems of construction and lighting. Create a basic background colour to lay the foundations for your colour palette.



**02 Block in basic lighting** Block in the basic forms of the figure with a simple Hard Round brush. Get the basic feel for ice at this stage before doing any fancy texture work. Think of all the forms as simply as possible; as basic cylinders, spheres and so on. Don't overcomplicate things.



**03 Introduce textures** Start introducing some basic textures on top of the smooth surfaces. Paint studies from photos if you do not know how to depict the different materials in your piece yet. The point is to get enough variation to the surfaces in order to give you a good grounding when it comes to painting in the details.



**04 Reflections and highlights** Start painting reflections and highlights. Think of the light source and how the light is behaving with the materials. Make colour adjustments if necessary. The shadows don't get very dark as light is bouncing around all over the place and also penetrating the surfaces and illuminating them from the inside.



**05 The finishing details** Paint lots of small cracks and other details to finalise the effect. Try to get enough variation in the different surfaces. Don't be afraid to change the design even at a late stage if you feel like something isn't working the way you want. Make the final level and colour adjustments to punch up the tones, and that's it!



**JUKKA  
RAJANIEMI**

Artist info



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I'm a digital artist and illustrator with seven years of experience working professionally. I started working as a game artist in various studios and just recently decided to try my luck with freelance illustration.



Paint lots of small cracks and other details to finalise the effect, and make sure you have enough variation in the different surfaces.



# Draw your own magical manga

Discover supernatural manga characters and their own particular traits

**Magic!** Whether or not you are a happy-go-lucky girl or a serious manga man, we all dream of having magical powers that suit our personality. There are many kinds of manga characters you can draw upon, and most of us will be familiar with how they stereotypically use their magic in the more supernatural stories. This can be expressed in many ways in art, either in colour, shape or even sparkles – every little detail helps to shape the personality of the magic and the magician. But most important is that the magic should reflect the personality that it comes from.

A happy young girl who comes across a great source of power is likely to bend the magic to help herself and others. She may use it to do good and store it in the form of a beautiful jewel, unleashed with a cute spell and costume! If a bad character comes across a source of power, though, he may use it to do evil and use it on the offensive to harm others. A beautiful jewel is out of the question, such strong, evil magic should only be contained in a crooked staff or even a creepy-looking book. To get the hang of how to illustrate the magic, you need to understand the character and how they will bend their powers to their will. Think about how and why it will be used, and you will come up with some original ways to express the magic. In this art skills tutorial, we look at the five most common stereotypes of magic-using characters in manga.

## THE CHIBI APPRENTICE

This poor, super-cute chibi is probably an overworked helper of some silly magical girl or powerful male wizard.

Either way, don't underestimate his abilities! He has a great deal more power than his little form suggests. Perhaps he can summon a powerful burst of magic or even lift heavy things. It doesn't last very long, though, and his magic is probably as cute as he is.



## THE TEMPLE PRIESTESS

Quiet and demure, the temple priestess has a magical power all of her own. She may look innocent, but with her training comes years of practice to exorcise demons and ghosts. When needed, her magic can get occult and very powerful in order to deal with bad behaviour. Make her magic look beautiful yet sharp and intense with thick strokes.

### SCHIN LOONG



Artist info

[schin-art.tumblr.com](http://schin-art.tumblr.com)

I don't even want super-fancy magical girl powers. All I want is a kind of spell that does my dishes and laundry.



# Fantasy Art Skills



## THE MAGICAL GIRL

Everyone knows this girl. She's the clumsy one at school who is always late for class and bad at her studies. Sometimes she is even bullied by the popular girls. But don't be fooled, late at night you may get into trouble and, suddenly, a pretty, magical girl (who looks suspiciously like your classmate!) saves you with beautiful sparkles and blinding light. Her magic is mostly pretty and innocent, and contained within a secret vessel, such as a jewel that transforms into a sceptre. The effects are usually very sparkly and meant to deter the attacker rather than cause harm.



## THE HANDSOME SORCERER

Usually an older character, this handsome sorcerer has a dark side to his calm demeanour. He may look carefree and pleasant, but his powers tend to be a little darker. Where did he learn how to control fire and lightning? His magical effects are still rather sparkly but should also have an edgier glow to them. They're much stronger and vigorous, and may turn nasty any minute.

## THE MOTHERLY WITCH

Don't let her fool you. Old age just taught her to hide her power and turn it into something much more subtle. She may not look like much but the secrets she holds can surprise you! This elderly witch knows a thing or two about herblore, animals and the properties of plants, and is forever mixing potions and teas to cure the sick. Her magic tends to be for good and looks warm and inviting. If provoked, though, you never know what poison she might 'accidentally' add to your tea.







# Classic warriors and how to draw them

Learn how to accurately depict a collection of the world's greatest warrior characters

**Today we will try our hand at some warrior archetypes.** Warriors are a brilliant fantasy character type to draw. You can render them as stoic, fierce, on the attack, on the defence, full of rage or full of disciplined stillness. We have the Amazonian warrior: the fierce, tall fighting women of the ancient world. Then we have the barbarian: the wild, unruly tribesman. Of course there's the knight: the steel-skinned fighting man at the beck and call of his lord. We also have the ninja: the master of shadows and assassin of feudal Japan. And we have the hoplite warrior: the integral part of the phalanx in the Hellenistic world.

For my illustrations I use MyPaint – a freeware program you can download online – because it makes inking easy and has some other great tools. That doesn't mean that you have to work with this software, though, the techniques here should be applicable across any program. For my personal and professional work I use Adobe Photoshop CS3 and MyPaint on a PC running Windows 7.



## THE NINJA

Every kid I knew as a child went absolutely bonkers for ninjas, including myself. In drawing this piece I felt especially nostalgic. It brought back all the times I drew the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and of course the Foot clan. I included a couple of little touches that harken back to those old drawings I did. I also chose a more stealthy and prone pose to represent the preferred attack method of a master assassin.





# Fantasy Art Skills

## THE KNIGHT

The typical storybook knight is a person of valour and chivalry, and is the paragon of skill in combat via countless tourneys and tilts. Elsewhere they could be little more than hired swords of a noble house, lord or lady. For this piece I chose a paladin, the good-hearted, wandering knight under a holy charge. I also chose to give him a little more action in his pose, rather than the standard armoured tank that knights are usually represented as. He's a warrior of grace, humility and honour. I had a little fun with the swirling cloak in this one. In these images, you can create a lot of personality with a little bit of clothing.

## MATTHEW OLSON

Artist info



[mattolsonart.deviantart.com](http://mattolsonart.deviantart.com)

Matt is a freelance illustrator and graphic designer. He has worked as a concept artist and has had several comic books published, including his own creation, *InterGALactic*, in *Heavy Metal* magazine.

## THE HOPLITE

A hoplite was a citizen-soldier of the Ancient Greek city states. Hoplites were primarily armed as spearmen and fought in a phalanx formation. With the success of the movie *300*, these ancient warriors (Spartans) were brought to the fore, albeit in a very stylised way. But that's what it's all about! I chose a traditional short sword with a decorated ring shield to go with the Spartan-styled helm and greaves. The pose is understated but fierce and professional, as is the cog of the war machine of ancient Greece.

## THE AMAZON

A female warrior archetype from the ancient world (mentioned in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*), she is strong and stoic. Wielding a spear and shield, she is unmatched on the ancient battlefield. I decided to give her a relaxed pose, as if she stands pondering a victory or glowering over a maimed opponent. In order to maintain speed and quickness, she wears very light armour, limited to pauldrons and a hoplite-style helm. This daughter of Themyscira is the epitome of the strength and power of women.

## THE BARBARIAN

Barbarians are tribal warriors famous for their battle fury. When you think of the barbarian, historically, you think Picts and Vikings. In fiction, you might think of Cimmerians (although they actually existed in the ancient world too). For this version, I chose a combination of the Picts and Vikings: the facial tattoos and war paint of the Pictish warriors with the fur-trimmed garb and twin axes of the Vikings. For the pose I picked a more kinetic, active, attacking angle. I stopped short of making him a pure Berserker. I tried to capture the wild rage, but tempered it with fighting skill.



# Draw poses for quest fantasy

The essential skills you need for drawing fantasy characters on an unexpected journey

In this guide, you'll learn how to draw characters engaged in the activities and poses that relate to a mission or quest, such as walking, running, climbing, riding, exploring and resting. We'll show you how to express the tiredness of a long trip, how to portray tension and rest in your drawings and how to draw these poses to convey character and correct muscle structure.

You will learn to clearly show the activities that your characters are engaged in, but also to compare characters based on their behaviour and the small details that make each personality unique. This works in terms of their physical structure, personality and storytelling.

To illustrate these poses we'll use some classic fantasy characters like halflings, dwarves, elves, magicians and warriors. Every character has distinctive physical and expressive elements to draw from. For example, a rich warrior is differentiated from a poor one by his armour and clothing as well as by his pose and behaviour.

To portray these characters you need to have a good knowledge of both human bone and muscle structure. You need to know the characteristics of anatomy, therefore, because they must be changed depending on whether you are drawing a hobbit, elf or any other fantastic creature.

Study references on the web, in movies and, of course, take some photos of yourself or your friends and family in some of these poses to help you. Small children, for example, make great stand-ins for shorter character types!

## FEMALE ELF RANGER

A classic female elf with a tall and slender body and strong legs. Her step is sure and elegant, which helps her seek and hit targets with her bow. She is light footed and leaves no trace behind.



## HOBBIT

This figure is a hobbit. He walks fast in little steps because his legs are short – look at the way a toddler or small child walks for inspiration. His feet are very big but permit him to walk silently and hide himself inside the forest.

## Tiredness and tension

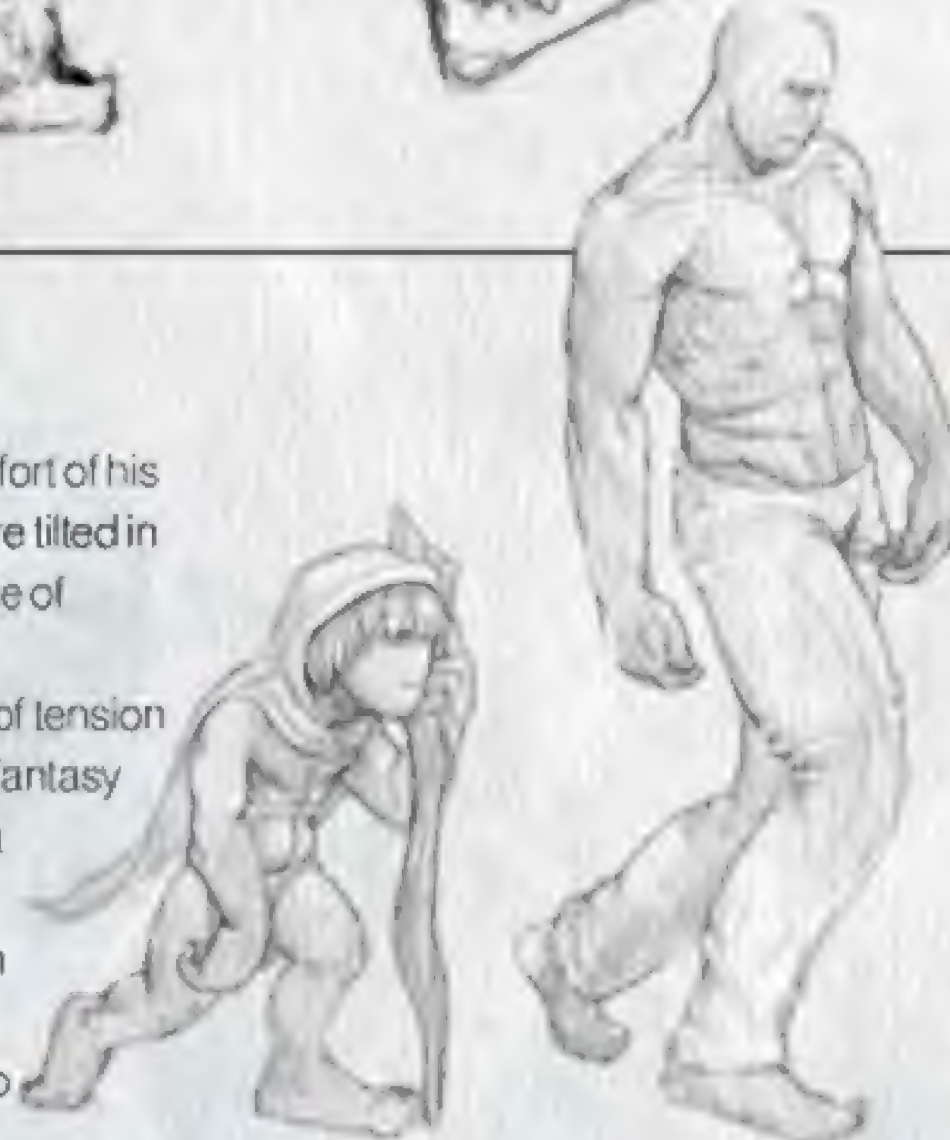
This drawing shows two characters who are very different in both race and physical dimensions, but are displaying the same physical state: tiredness.

The smallest figure, a hobbit-style halfling, leans on a stick that helps him on his hard and difficult walk. The bent back and sagging arm give him more of a feeling of heaviness and his foot seems to drag to enhance the look of effort.

The strong human figure seems unbalanced and unstable, as though he

is going to fall because of the effort of his trek. His chest and shoulders are tilted in order to stay in some semblance of upright balance while walking.

Being able to show this kind of tension and exhaustion is a key skill for fantasy artists. Consider how much of a typical quest fantasy is spent wandering around the woods in the rain! Also, characters often need to snap from this pose into battle readiness.



“ Being able to show this kind of tension and exhaustion is a key skill for fantasy artists ”



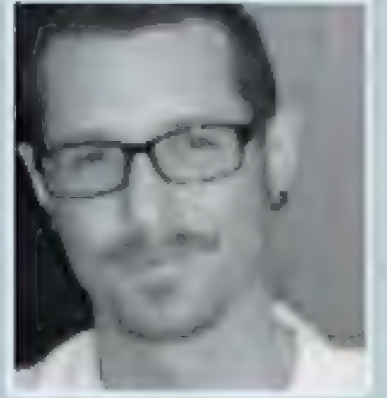
# Fantasy Art Skills

## MAGICIAN

The walk of this figure seems on the surface to be neither agile nor spry. He looks tired and helps himself along with his staff. Don't be fooled! He can step straight up into an attack or defence pose.

## GIUSEPPE DI GIROLAMO

Artist info



[www.peppeti.blogspot.it](http://www.peppeti.blogspot.it)

I'm a freelance illustrator, character designer, artist and musician. I live in Palermo and study development graphics at the Academy of Fine Arts. I also belong to a gaming design team.

## THE WELL-TO-DO WARRIOR

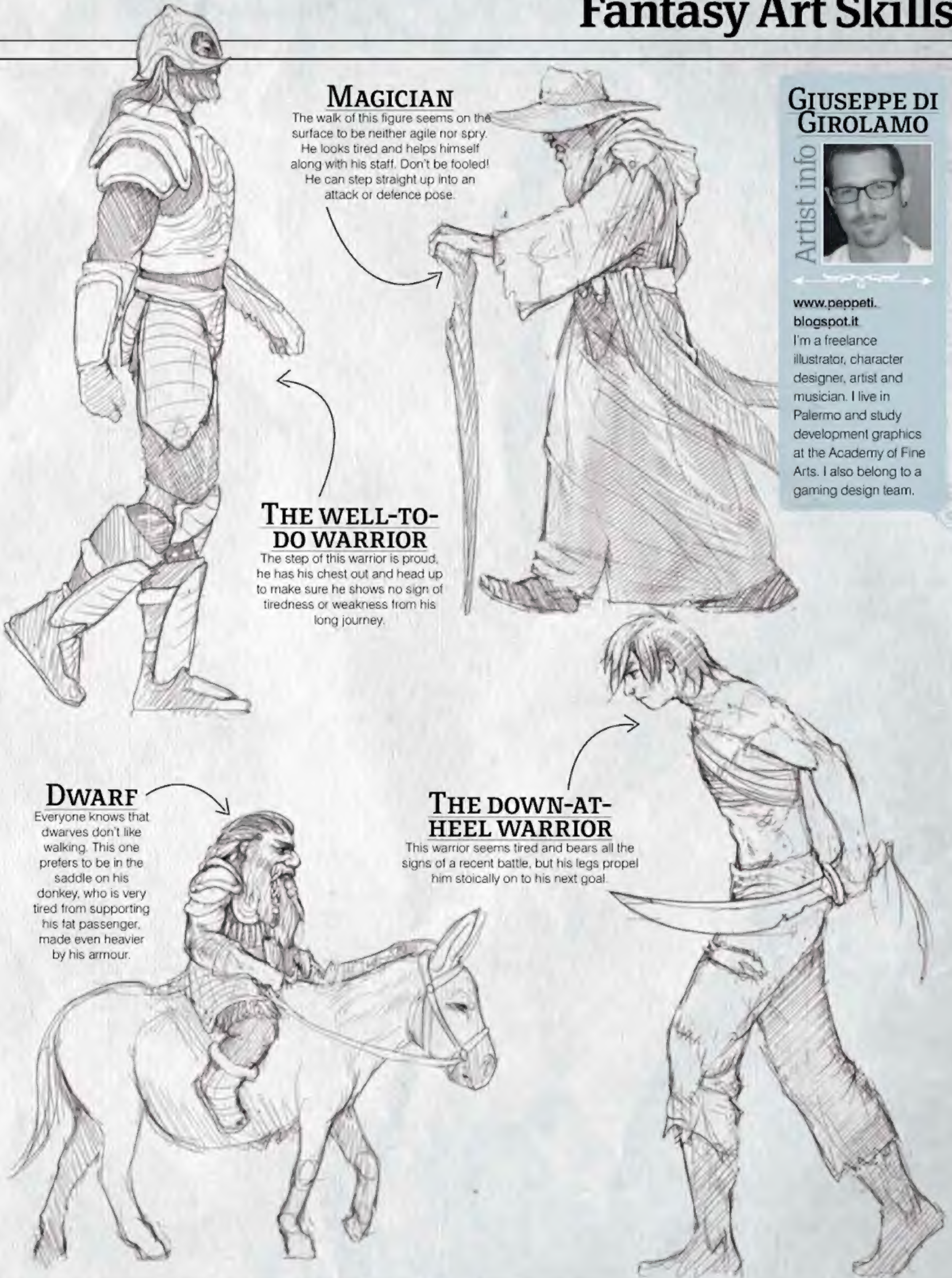
The step of this warrior is proud, he has his chest out and head up to make sure he shows no sign of tiredness or weakness from his long journey.

## DWARF

Everyone knows that dwarves don't like walking. This one prefers to be in the saddle on his donkey, who is very tired from supporting his fat passenger, made even heavier by his armour.

## THE DOWN-AT-HEEL WARRIOR

This warrior seems tired and bears all the signs of a recent battle, but his legs propel him stoically on to his next goal.





## Pose your characters

Details and simplicity are essential to give your drawings strong personality

Now we'll show you some sketches to represent scenes that you might want to include in a typical fantasy quest. These are climbing, riding, walking, exploring, running and resting.

These drawings are very simple with few details, but they clearly show what kind of action every character is engaged in, actions that will look different for every type of character.

The expression in the whole figure is another essential element of drawing. Like body language, actions are more understandable when correctly represented. Think of a hobbit climbing – this has a subtext of effort, exertion and bravery, as they're reluctant to go up too high, whereas for an elf, climbing is an easy, effortless exercise.

### CLIMBING HIGH

To illustrate climbing I drew a hobbit, using holes and little jutting rocks to cling to.

Shorter characters like hobbits and dwarves will struggle the most with climbing because of their size relative to the height they need to reach, so they're excellent for practising climbing-based drawings. To make the hobbit's musculature properly tense, mark out its edge with pencil to give it more volume. To lift the hobbit enough to reach another slot, his left leg and foot have the maximum contraction possible, which enables him to propel himself upwards.



### WELL-DESERVED REST

After some exertion it's necessary to get a few moments of rest.

Here a wandering warrior – recognisable by his threadbare clothes and old sword, collapses to the ground and props his back against a tree trunk to snatch a few moments of sleep. The leg is stretched and relaxed and his head is turned upwards (a good soldier takes sleep anywhere he can get it). This gives him an air of serenity and peace.



“ Like body language, actions are far more understandable when correctly represented ”

## TRACKING AND SEARCHING

Exploring, tracking and hunting are all key parts of a quest fantasy. Here our elven ranger is bent to the ground to search for traces of an enemy or her quarry.

Look at the relaxed and supple pose – elves are traditionally lithe and not as prone to tiredness as other fantasy races, so she can move gracefully even in awkward poses. Her look is turned laterally to perceive the direction that the group must take.



## WALKING

The character in this drawing has a long robe, big hat and a staff, instantly marking him out as a sorcerer. He is walking in a calm and composed fashion, carefully watching what is happening around him. One foot moves forwards while his robe hides the other one. He holds an arm behind his back, suggesting age and the need for a bit of support, while the other hand grips his magical staff. He gives the impression of age, but he also has a strong physical presence – he can plant his feet firmly and launch a magical attack at any time.

## RUNNING ATTACK

This well-to-do warrior is making a frontal attack while he runs, screaming a war cry at his opponent. His feet and legs are less defined to suggest movement and speed, but his muscular arms are well defined to show the force he uses. Practise gesture drawings of the pose – remember, this warrior will need to sweep up and out of his walk and straight into the attack.



## STUBBORN AS A MULE

Here our battle-hardened dwarf is trying to correct the direction of his stubborn donkey. The hands of the dwarf grasp with force – look at the tension running through the arms and down into the sides and legs, which clench tightly and cling on. His toes are up and heels down so, if the donkey decides on an unexpected trot, he will stay on its back.



# Evolution of an image

Milton Das walks us through his image Mysterious Ninja Girl

## Milton Das

Artist info



dantevirgil.deviantart.com

Software used Photoshop

I passed my college exams last year around September and have been trying to work on my art since then. Before that I was not too serious about it but now I'm really working to improve. I have always loved doing art, though. I am based in Calcutta, India, and love comics, manga and game art.



## About Mysterious Ninja Girl

The image was done for a competition on deviantART for Samurai Genji, which is a comic-book series. They needed a new female character so some of the details were already laid out for us, like her mask. She was supposed to be a ninja, but I thought of combining her with some elements of the samurai. Also, for her mount, I had not really thought of adding it to the image until after finishing the character. Then I realised that the image had too much negative space for my liking so I decided to give her a pet.

### 01

Here I'm laying down the rough pose and completing the face. Quite a few of the details for the character were already given in the competition brief so I was able to use those as a starting point. I decided to give her quite loose, flowing robes to contrast with the flash of armour you can see as well as her sword. I felt that this would also help to enhance the sense of movement in the piece.



05



06



**02**

After I had a basic composition down, I added some details to the top half and also changed the leg position as I felt the previous one was not giving her a strong enough pose. Then I started laying down the smaller details, as I felt the pose was looking good. The designs on the dress were done on separate layers in Overlay mode – the only special blend mode I used for this image.

**03**

Here I darkened the background and then I finished laying down the character details. The next stage in the process is to sharpen those details up and refine them. I took this opportunity to add more details to her costume, such as the frayed edges of her robe and the patterns of the fabric. The lighting and shadow are also looking a lot closer to the final effect that I wanted.

**04**

I felt that there was a bit too much negative space in the image, so at this stage I thought that it might be a good idea to add a cute pet by her side to serve as a mount and protector to her character. I quickly sketched out the rough contour of the wolf and, after I was satisfied with this, blocked in the larger shapes and started to detail it to the same level as my ninja girl.

**05**

At this stage I continued detailing the wolf character, bearing in mind the lighting and creating a real sense of personality in his expression. I had plans to go with greyscale for the entire image, but the piece was looking a little dull so I added some colour for a point of interest. The vibrant red at the centre of the image suggests the glowing, powerful heart of her wolf companion.

**06**

I completed the wolf and its armour, and used a custom brush to add some foliage shadows to suggest an environment that's outside of the frame. I then distorted them according to the image so they look believable. I kept this element of the design in the central area to create a sort of vignette, and used the foliage pattern to cast some dappled light on the mysterious ninja.



GILANG  
ANDRIAN



I am a student who is currently studying at Nanjing Academy of Fine Arts, Nanjing. I love to draw and paint. My art is mostly influenced by Japanese and Korean style.

# Create a manga-inspired skyship

**Gilang Andrian** shows you the process of painting a manga skyship from sketch to polished piece

**Sky Cinema**

*Phacelia*

Even with a compass, compass roses and they can be made fun to draw and paint. They can take a variety of shapes, making experiments in shapes of the Wind, the Equinox Circle in the Sun and Moon's Moving Circle. The same designs are often repeated in sculpture, as evidenced by sculpture and tapestry. They have been combined with other symbols on walls and floors, sometimes in ornate panel designs. Your design can be a bellied up, a transparent ship, a passenger ship or even a floating island. There can be two faces or a face and a foot, or even a face and a foot as you paint. They can look literally aggressive or intimidating by making them look scary and comfortable or cool and just simple.

The day, they say, is filled with distractions such as profits or a holiday. Bear in mind that fantasy always involves a degree of illusion, and if an engineer, being so powerful, is that the machine could honestly exist in the sky. Above all, though, design your ship to be as unique as possible so that it will have a distinct visual appeal and way to please a customer.

As an author, you need to keep in mind that in picture storybooks, it's never just the words as well as the pictures, that help a child understand the story. So, for example, if you're describing a cat, make sure you use the right words for a cat's tail, ears, paws, etc. The storybook is a visual aid. The pictures are the main focus of the story. If you're not using the pictures to help the child understand the story, you're not using the pictures to help the child understand the story. You can create a great story by carefully considering the design of your text and the pictures to be integrated enough detail to let the reader's imagination work.



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# Video tutorial

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# Concept and design a robot



**Digital-Tutors**, the world's largest CG and VFX tutorial and training resource, takes you through the steps of concepting and creating a film-quality transforming robot

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*Photoshop*

## DIGITAL-TUTORS

Artist info



[www.digitaltutors.com](http://www.digitaltutors.com)

Digital-Tutors teaches the people who make movies and games by providing the world's largest CG and VFX training resource. With thousands of project-based videos, the training aims to make difficult concepts easy to grasp and complex topics fun to learn.



**Whether it's an epic film or a best-selling videogame, each one starts with an idea.** As a

concept artist for these projects, it is our responsibility to create visuals around these ideas so other artists in the project's pipeline have a solid direction from which to work.

When the instructional team here at Digital-Tutors sat down and began discussing how we could give our members a glimpse into what the production pipeline would look like to create a film-quality transforming robot, we immediately got excited. In this article, we'll walk you through the process used to paint our concept as well as share how the decisions the concept artist made would impact other artists later in the pipeline.

As the concept artist, your role falls at the very beginning of the process. Other artists depend on you so they can begin their roles, so the concept needs to be done fast. In the case of this image, we needed to create lots of options quickly so our team could

● Consider limiting yourself to working in greyscale initially. Removing the colour decisions gives you one less thing to think about



whittle them down using a process of elimination. By focusing strictly on the silhouette first, we were able to generate several options quickly. A minimal amount of time was spent removing areas of the silhouettes to provide insight into where major details would be. Even in this crude form, we could begin to make assumptions about the robot. Things like personality, alignment and even how he would move. It was eventually determined that we liked the

larger, more cumbersome option as we wanted the vehicle form to be based on the 789c mining dump truck.

With a silhouette decided on, it was time to begin solidifying the basic details. Moving forward, there were several things on our minds. For example, every major body joint needed to be unobstructed so the robot could move freely when animated. Enough recognisable pieces from the 789c mining truck also need to



● When creating silhouettes, stay loose and focus on form and energy. It's important to generate several options early on

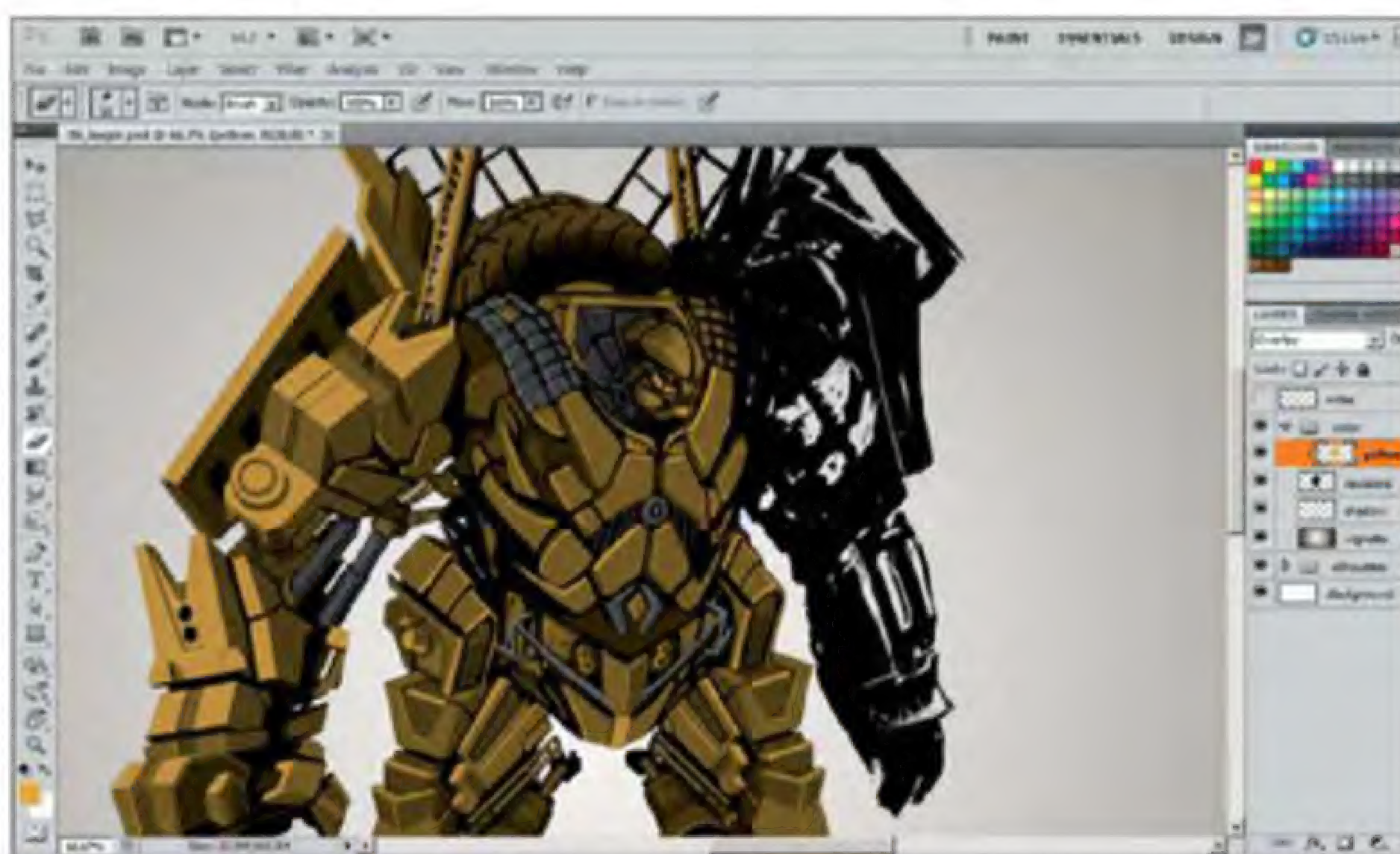


● If your concept has some level of symmetry, consider duplicating details and transforming them to fit the other side



# Video tutorial

Concept and design a robot



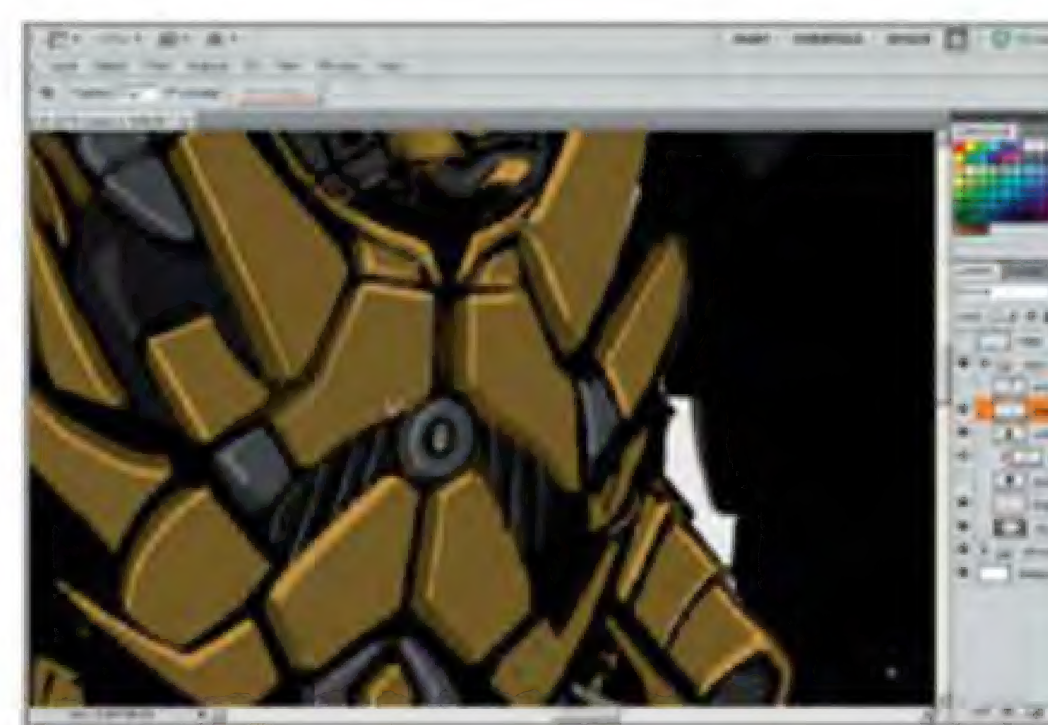
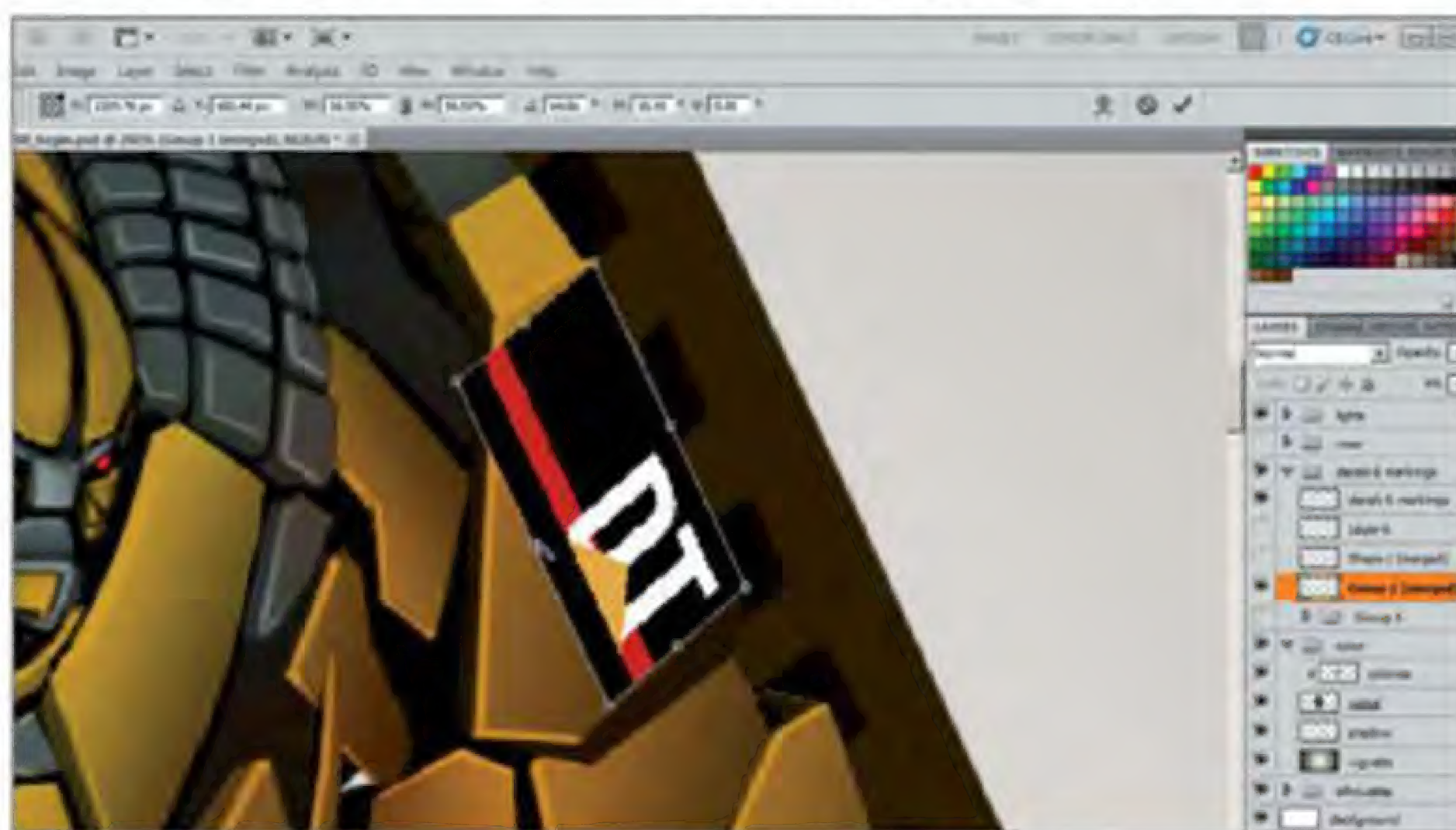
● Colour can be quickly added to a greyscale concept by creating a new clipping layer and setting its blend mode to Overlay

be included to maintain the believability that this robot and the truck are one and the same.

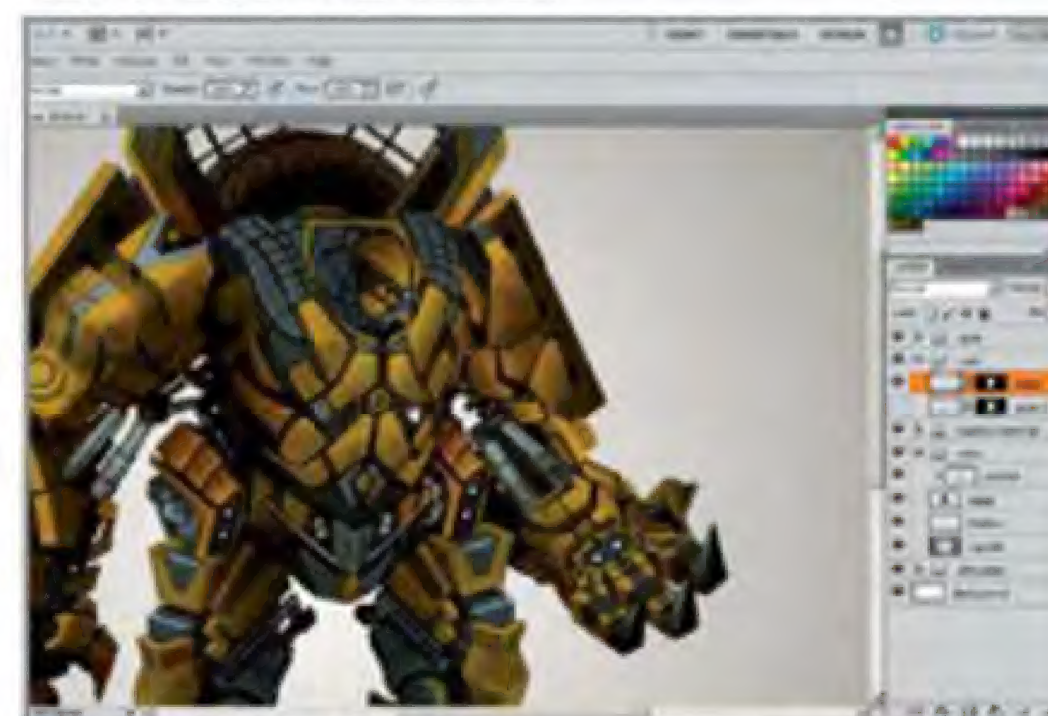
By working only in greyscale initially, we refined the forms without worrying about colour. We could also focus on the excessive level of detail that was necessary for our robot. Knowing that a key part of the final transformation animation would be trickery and deception, this over-the-top detail creates a visual distraction for viewers. It also provides more opportunities for our animator to create secondary animations that also attract attention.

This process of refinement included extensive experimentation and feedback from the other artists on the team. On several occasions, the decision was made to rework an area based on either aesthetics or its function. The design needed to be more than just a pretty picture. The final robot asset had to fit the needs of everyone in the pipeline so their jobs could be executed without hindrance.

● Decals for your concepts can be designed flat and then warped or free transformed to fit the surface you would like to apply them to



● The Polygonal Lasso tool can be used to quickly target pixels to select certain areas of colour while refining the shape's edges at the same time



● Consider masking your dirt layer based on the concept's silhouette. This will enable you to use a brush that scatters without worrying about where the dirt lands

With the greyscale design approved, it was time to move onto colour. Because we had rendered the robot's forms first using only values, colour information was all that was missing. A layer set to the blend mode Overlay was the quickest and easiest way to start this process. Flat colour was first applied to establish base colours. Later, new layers were added to build in the necessary shadows and highlights. One technique used to quickly make selections of the various uniquely shaped surfaces was with the Polygonal Lasso tool. This enabled us to quickly select the mechanical shapes with a great deal of precision and apply a gradient to them. To finish off the colour step, decals, dirt and other wear marks were painted onto the robot design. Some of these details needed to be present on the robot as well to make it believable.

Before handing off the finished artwork to our lead modelling instructor, we felt that it was important to make it completely clear which pieces of the truck we considered to be landmarks that would also be visible on the robot. This would enable him to take those pieces of geometry from the truck and build them into his robot model. We accomplished this simply by making a new layer in the document, highlighting pieces on the robot and mapping them to the image of the 793C mining truck.

With the concept art complete, the project can now move down the pipeline to the next artist. We would love for you to check out our Transforming Robot Production Pipeline learning path to see each step in this highly requested series. This project was an incredibly fun one for all of us here at Digital-Tutors.

“ The design needed to be more than just a pretty picture... [it] needed to fit the needs of everyone in the pipeline ”



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